

A  
PRESENT  
FOR  
Teeming VVomen.

OR,

Scripture-Directions for Women  
with child, how to prepare for  
the hour of TRAVEL.

Written first for the private use of a Gen-  
tlewoman of quality in the West, and now  
published for the common good.

---

By John Oliver, less then the last  
of all Saints.



Gen. 3. 13. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, the Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

Ver. 16. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children.

1 Tim. 2. 14, 15. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was first in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-bearing, if they continue in the faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.

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T O

The ever Honoured,  
My truly noble and vertuous Friend,  
The Ornament of her Countrey,  
and Glory of her Family,

Mrs. BRIDGET SEYMOUR,  
of Hanford-house, in the Coun-  
ty of DORSET.

 Crave your pardon, for so  
long detaining that which  
you have so desirously ex-  
pected. And now, that I  
do expose it to publick view, when I  
cast about in my thoughts, to whom  
to dedicate it, I could not but retain  
a grateful memory, of the many  
noble favours, whereby your

A 3 worthy

# The Epistle

(a) Mrs. *worthy relations*, viz. your (a) Mo-  
*An Philips* ther and your (b) Aunt did ever  
*of Montauk* cure.  
(b) *Mrs.* *Ma. Speake* *irreligious*, as not to have a more  
*of Whit-* *lackinton*, *then ordinary respect*, for that (c) both in  
*Somerset-* *true piety and goodness wherein they*  
*shire.*  
(c) *Prov.* *excel.* But when I remember, that  
31.30. *Phil. 1. 3,* you have so fairly written after their  
4,5,6,7. *copy, (d) that the vertues of both*  
c 4.14.16. *are visible in you; so that any thing*  
1 Thes. 1. *redounding to your just praise, will*  
2,3,4,5,6. *tend also to their honour; and seeing*  
2 Thes. 1. *your first pregnancy gave me this*  
3,4. *occasion of presenting you with my*  
Philem.4. *thoughts on this subject in a short*  
5,6,7. *(d) 2 Joh.*  
Rev.2.2, *1.4. 3 Joh.* *scheme, which I have now thus en-*  
3,9,19, *larged; and you were pleased (as*  
&c. Acts *your courteous manner ever was) to*  
9.26. *accept it with that thankfulness, as*  
3,4,5,6. *if it had been some greater matter,*  
and as if it had been of some use to  
you

## Dedicatory.

you in that condition. Therefore I humbly crave leave of those my obliging friends, to dedicate this piece to you onely. And had I no other errand to appear in print, this were enough; to tell the world for their imitation, that he must travel far, and seek long among our Nobility and Gentry, that shall finde any of more ingenuity, of more devotion to God, more obedience and reverence to Parent, more courtesie and reality in affable conversation, more prudence and modesty in your speeches, and deportment, more respect to pious Ministers, more happy in your memory to retain what you heard, more pious in your retention to commit it to writing next day for your private use, then you were in your single estate, and the flower of

## The Epistle

your age; a season wherein others  
of your quality doe minde some  
lesser things in jest, but nothing  
in earnest. This made you amiable  
*in the eyes of all that knew you, but*  
*especially to him, who is now your*  
*yoak-fellow, a Gentleman of whose*  
*worth many say so much, that I need*  
*say nothing.* And indeed *in the*  
*judgement of all that know you, what*  
*can be said more for the proof of his*  
*(a) Prov. 38. 23. wisdome, (a) then his making*  
*Ch. 19. 4. such a choice? Yet, I doubt not,*  
*Ch. 12. 4. but his (b) tenderness and faith-*  
*5. 25. ad 33 fulnesse to you, and his most happy*  
*Mar. 19. 5. 1 Pet. 3. 7. immunity from the gentile vices*  
*of this degenerate age, will give*  
*you reall cause of continuall thank-*  
*fulness, to that good providence,*  
*which first wedded your hearts to-*  
*gether. But that which addes to*  
*your*

## Dedicatory.

your fame, and doth, indeed, crown  
all, is, (a) your perseverance. <sup>(a)</sup> Per-  
severantia  
Your married estate hath not marred  
tantum e-  
your pious disposition. Your love  
tedorum  
to husband and children, not aliena-  
est. Bern.  
ted your love from him, who loved  
Ser.parv.  
you first, and is himself altogether  
Serm. 61.  
lovely. Your commands and cares  
1 John 4.  
over your own servants hath not  
o, 19.  
made you negligent of your Master  
Cant. 5.16.  
in Heaven ; nor your dome-  
stick family-affairs, diverted your  
conscience from living (b) as a <sup>(b)</sup> Eph.  
member of the household of  
15, 16.  
Faith, and the family of God.  
Go on, I beseech you (for I know  
your Christian wisdome and mode-  
sty will turn my commendations into  
admonitions) I beseech you, I say, to  
go on, and to let the world see, that  
Piety is not inconsistent with <sup>c</sup> Gal-

lantry,

<sup>c</sup> Gratias  
deo qui ha-  
rum rerum  
& gloriae  
transitoriae  
gloriosum  
in uobis est  
operatus  
contemp-  
tu[m]. Bern.  
ep. 23.

## The Epistle

lantry, that it is not (absolutely) impossible, for a Camel to goe through the eye of a needle, that one may be a Gentlewoman, or a Lady, & yet Elect; that noble dispositions do yet remain in(some) noble breasts; that some there may be, who are both rich in the world, and rich towards God. And let me further intreat you, to be always learning that lesson, which can never be too exactly learnt, viz.

(a) *Efto  
rebus ac  
facultati-  
bus tuis in  
vita hac  
uti velis,  
dummodo  
tui vel mo-  
riens non  
obliviscaris  
& ad eius  
cultum atq;  
honorem  
referendam  
tibi sub-  
stantiam  
tuam me-  
mineris, cu-  
jus remu-  
nere  
acepisse  
cognoscis.*  
*Salvianus  
ad Eccles.  
cath. lib. 2.  
p. 407.*

(a) to know how to abound, and how to be full, how to use this world, as not abusing it, and to rejoice, as if we rejoiced not, for the time is short. It is but a little time ere he that shall come will come. Wherefore, the Lord burn up within us the remainders of our dross and tin, that when this droſſie

## Dedicatory.

the degenerate world shall be consumed by fire, there may not be found so much of the world in our hearts, as shall make us fit fuel for everlasting burnings. He give us more believing apprehensions, and lively affections, after the everlasting enjoyment of himself, in that Heaven of heavens, where they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, where they know none after the flesh, where they hunger and thirst no more, where they have perpetual light, yet no use of Sun or Moon, or any sublunary comforts, but are as the Angels of God (i e.) fully at rest in their desires, because with the Lord, who is the center of spirits, in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand are such pleasures

2 Pet. 3.7.  
ad 14.  
Mar. 12.25  
2 Cor. 5. :  
16.  
Rev. 7.16.  
Rev. 21.27  
1 Thes. 4.  
17.  
Pf. 16.11.

## The Epistle

syres for evermore, that they never thirst after the present delights of the sons of men, but scorne the very thoughts of any mortal enjoyments; & I am much mistaken in my conceptions of Eternity, if it prove not some addition to my joy before God for ever, if this book of mine (whoever else disregard it) may be (as I hope it will) an instrumental cause of reall addition to your grace, a help to your joy in believing, & a support to you in the time of need. But, this I leave wholly to the powerful blessing of that God, whose I am, and whom I serve. And, God forbid that I should sin against him, in ceasing to pray for you, that you may be inwardly fill'd with all the fulness of God, and may outwardly shine, not in costly

Thess. 2.

19, 20.

Phil 2. 16.

## Dedicatory.

costly array, but (which beco-  
meth women professing godli-  
nesse) in good works, *that the*  
*dayes of your tranquillity may be*  
*lengthened, that you may see your*  
*childrens children, and peace*  
upon Israel, *that wherein other*  
daughters have done vertuously,  
you may strive to excel them all;  
that so your children may rise up  
and call you blessed, and your  
husband also may praise you;  
*that you may patiently run your*  
*race, and faithfully finish your*  
*course, that when you have confli-*  
*eted with all the dangers and incon-*  
*veniences of your pilgrimage, you*  
*may receive the end of your*  
*faith, and, in a good old age en-*  
*ter into rest. If my tongue doe not*  
*always use these very words, yet my*  
*soul*

1 Tim:2.

9,10.

1 Pet.3.3,

4,5.

Prov. 31.

28,29.

The Epistle, &c.

*soul shall thus pray for you without ceasing, till I my selfe shall cease to be, till when, I crave leave to subscribe,*

Your ever devoted Servant in the things of Christ,

J. Q.

**TO THE**

# **READER.**

*Good Reader,*

I Have, according to the Authors desire, perused this short Treatise, and finde it pithy, pious and plain. Thou wilt find nothing therein, that's either Factious or Seditious, but that which tends to advance true piety: The Authors design being not to gratifie any discontented Party, but to promote the power of Godlinesse in all.

And

*To the Reader.*

And though the Title tell thee,  
that this booke is more peculi-  
arly intended for Child-bearing  
Women, yet thou wilt finde  
that much of the matter con-  
tained herein will be profi-  
table to any that shall read it se-  
riously, and improve it aright.  
That it may, Reader, be of good  
use to thy Soule, is the Prayer of

*Thine in our Lord,*

*Edw. Hicks D.D.*

*Minister at Rood Church*

*London.*



TO THE

*Christian Reader.*



OME have disputed,  
whether the invention  
of *Printing* and  
*Guns* have done more  
harme then good. I  
shall not determine.

Onely this I dare say, that where  
*Guns* have slain their thousands, the  
*Presse* hath slain its ten thousands.  
And the latter kind of slaughter is  
more deplorable, because it reaches  
to mens Soules. *Of this misery there  
will be no end, while controversies take up  
our time, or novelties take with our fan-  
cy.* I having now some leasure( where-  
of, as even a Heathen said, I must  
give an account) I bethought my self,

(a)

wherein

## The Epistle

wherein I might be most serviceable to my generation, and bring most glory to my God and Saviour. Therefore knowing that the Presse will reach those who are otherwise out of my reach, I resolved in some lesser piece first, to make an essay how any thing of mine would passe in the world. And thinking it presumption (yea something worse) to transcribe, and pick both method, matter, and words, out of other authors, pretending a new treatise upon a beaten argument, which others had better handled before; finding also by experience, that some late needlesse Writers have done the Church more disservice, by taking of the minds of men from more ancient Authors, than reall service by putting plain truth only into a finer mode; I did therefore conclude, to accept of that for my theame, which all Divines (for ought I can finde) have as with one consent left untouched, as if they had bequeathed it to me to handle. So that I hope, all ingenuous Readers will be more candid

to the Reader.

did to me, whatever imperfections their critical eyes may here discover, considering, \* that I could not plow with another mans Heifer, nor boast in another mans Line of things made ready to my hand; but was forced to break the Ice my selfe, to walke in an untrodden path, and to spin the thread out of my own bowels. And I hope, that among the many women with child, it may light into the hands of some, that are serious, humble, and teachable; whom I would intreat to peruse it deliberately, (if they please) a chapter in a day, secondeing it with Meditation and Prayer; and if they thus go through it in order, I question not, but if I never hear of them, yet God shall soon hear their voice of thanksgiving, for some benefit by it. As for others, I have this onely request to them, that they would let it passe quietly till some abler head shall furnish the world with a better: \* Which I should be right glad to see. And saving my reverence to those abler heads, I cannot understand why this point should

(a 2)

be Tacit.

\* Iter e non tritā authoribū viā, nec quā pera grinaria a nimus ex petat.  
Nemo apud nos qui id tentaverit Plin. præf hist. nat. Jud. 14. 18. 2 Cor. 10. 16.

\* Ego quod porui id feci, nec impedito, si quis in eodem circulo currat a palmarum Lipl. in

## The Epistle

be held so inconsiderable, as to be below the studies of any of our voluminous learned Clarks, who yet have the leisure and condescension to write polemical Treatises, about very small matters. Surely, Women in this condition have their peculiar duties, and their peculiar motives to diligence in them; and their number is considerable. They are a worthy part of the Community, then especially, when breeding, for much of the comfort of the present generation, and the honour of God, and future being of his Church in succeeding generations, is concerned in those Infants yet un-borne. We know that their dangers are many, that their dayes are frequently shortened by travel, that their souls are precious, and therefore how precious should be \* to us any opportunity, \* of acquainting them with God, with their duty to him, to their own souls, and to the children they go with. Surely, our relation to, or Acquaintance with some of them, our Christian compassion that we owe to all of them, doth oblige us, not onely to wish their happy deliverance, but as occasion is offered, to promote

\* Gal. 6.  
10.  
\* Job. 32.  
21.

*to the Reader.*  
*mote their preparation for travell.*

And from this pious intention I suppose it was, that Mr. Deering at the end of his works, hath a Godly prayer, fitted for Women with child, and because I know not of any other, that hath given any such, I shall here transcribe it.

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### A Pray.

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## A Prayer before child-birth.

All thy wayes are just, Oh dear Father,  
And thy judgments are true alto-  
gether. For worthily doth man live in the  
sweat of his face, and the woman bring  
forth children with much pain and travails,  
and with great danger. Yet, O mercifull  
Father, this pain is not a sufficient punish-  
ment for the grievous transgressions  
wherewith we and our fore-fathers have  
transgressed thy most holy will. The punish-  
ment is in respect of our demerits too smal,  
but in respect of our weaknesse too great  
for us without thee to endure. Wherefore  
as I acknowledge, O mercifull Father, this  
travel in child-birth, which now approach-  
eth, to be a just reward of my manifold  
sins, so I acknowledge also thy ready Arm  
of defence, stretched out over me, and over  
all them that call upon thee in faith. Grant  
therefore O dear Father, that I may pray  
in faith, and patiently wait for that time  
of my travel, that I may thankfully and  
constantly endure it when it shall be pre-  
sent:

to the Reader.

sent: knowing that though I then feel some  
taste of the reward of sin, yet I feel not all;  
and that little which I then feel, thou dost  
presently reward with comfort and glad-  
nesse, when a child is born into the world.  
The which comfortable and glad issue,  
grant me, O Lord, if it be thy good pleasure,  
and having received such fruit of my body;  
grant me moreover wisdom and strength  
to bring it up in thy fear, and to travel (as  
it were) again with it, till it be born again  
into a heavenly life, to the glory of thy holy  
name, and my greater joy: that so it may  
finally in Christ Jesus be partaker of those  
blessings, which thou dost plentifully rain  
down upon the faithfull and their seed for  
ever. And because I am not worthy to  
present this my suit to thy heavenly Ma-  
jesty of my self, a most wretched and  
sinfull woman, I offer it in the name, in the  
righteousnesse, and in the strength of my  
Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, praying  
furthermore as he taught us to pray, Our  
father &c.

They are also mentioned in the publick  
lyturgy, but where else I remember not.

Sure

## The Epistle

Sure I am, that all big-bellyed women had need to remember themselves, and to consider the things that belong to their peace before they be hid from their eyes. For if women will make no other preparation for lying in, then what is common, if they onely get linnen and other necessaries for the child, a nurse, a midwife, entertainment for the women that are called to their labour, a warme convenient chamber &c.

Gravida  
orpora cu-  
aredebent.  
ens item  
arū que-  
em desi-  
erat. Qua  
im pro-  
reantur à  
atre in  
ijus utero  
ntinentur,  
imentum  
piunt, ut  
terrā ea,  
a gie-  
ntur ex  
l. Arist.  
L lib. 7.

Which things I confess every one according to their ability should be mindfull of, in time, for as I have shewed in a distinct Chapter in this Book (a) women in this condition should be very careful of their bodies while they are with child, and very careful of providing all possible helps and conveniences against their lying in, But all these may prove miserable comforters, they may perchance need no other linnen shortly but a winding sheet, and have no other chamber but a grave, no neighbours but worms; or if they be delivered while yet they retain such unwillingnesse of

## To the Reader.

of mind to prepare for death, (as we say of all other deliverances granted to the ungodly) they are delivered (a) *in anger not in favour*, *with Gods curse not with his blessing*, and are (in all likelihood) reserved to the greater condemnation, when their sin is repined. Whereas, if they would seek the Lord while he may be found, if they would mind diligently the one thing necessary, if they would speedily fly to Christ for refuge, than they are safe, for whether they live or die their souls cannot miscarry. But of these things I have spoken more at large in the Book it self.

And now Reader let me draw to a conclusion. You must not expect from me the common complements of some writers, as that I should extenuate the worth of this Book (because 'tis mine) (a) or tell the Reader that it is un-

<sup>a)</sup> Siquidem  
tam inbecillia sunt hujus temporis judicia, ac penè tam nulla, ut nec  
qui legunt non tam considerent quid legant, quam cujus legant, iij  
tam dictionis vim atque virtutem, quādūm dictatoris cogitent dignita-  
tem. Salvian. Salomo Epo. p. 334.

worthy

(a) Rich.  
Rogers his  
seven trea-  
ties treat.  
6. c. 10. p.  
193. edit. 4.

Psal. 32: 6.  
1 Chron.  
28. 9.  
Cant. 3. 1.  
Heb. 12. 17.  
Ila. 55. 6.  
Luk. 10. 42

## The Epistle

worthy of his view, needs his pardon; and was wrested from me by the importunities of no man knows who, that else I should above all things have found to appear in Print &c. No, Let such strange dissemblers study a truer *Apology* for their false *Apologie*. When they have said never so much to their own disparagement, who believes them? Neither can I understand, how any honest man can Print a Book, and yet profess that he thinks none will be the wiser or better for reading of it. Let me therefore onely say this to the Reader, that I have in this piece, as small as 'tis, taken pains, and well considered of what I have written. The matter of it is generally *Scriptural*, and there is that truth of God in it, that commands your Christian regard. And God is my witnessse how often I implored his assistance in composing it, and his blessing on it when finished. That my labour will be accepted of the Saints is my greatest hope, but for praise or commendation from others, I am not sollicitous. In a word, I send it

To the Reader.

it (a) abroad with this confidence,  
that it will, by Gods blessing, do good (a) Mens  
to some. And I have this assurance, enim boni  
that there is nothing in it that can be studii ac  
burthfull to any, that will either right- pii voti,  
ly take it, or let it alone. Farewell in etiam si  
the Lord. affectum  
non invene.  
rit coepit  
operis, ha-

bet tamen præmium voluntatis.. Salvian. pref. in lib. de gub. dei

p. 3.

Thy souls friend

J. O.

Salvian

*Salvian. prefat. in Lib. de gubern. Dei Pag. 2. & 3.*

**O**mnis enim in scriptis suis causas tantum egerunt suas, & propriis magis laudibus quam aliorum utilitatibus consulentes, non id facere adnisi sunt, ut salubres ac salutiferi, sed ut scholastici ac diserti haberentur. Itaque scripta eorum aut vanitate sunt tumida, aut falsitate infamia, aut verborum fæditatibus sordida, aut rerum obscenitate vitiosa: Ut verè cum ingeniorum tantum laudem occupantes tam indignis rebus curam impenderent, non tam illustrasse mihi ipsa ingenia quam damnasse videantur. Nos autem qui rerum magis quam verborum amatores, utilia potius quam planctilia sectamur, neque id querimus, ut in nobis inania seculorum ornamenta, sed ut salubria rerum emolumenta laudentur in scriptiunculis nostris, non leno cinia esse volamus sed remedia, que scil: non tam ociosorum auribus placeant, quam ægrotorum mentibus profint, magnum ex ultraquere, celestibus donis, fructum reportaturi.

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Reader

Reader,

Some faults will escape, take what care we can ; those that are, are very few, and they onely in mis-spelling, wherefore I thought not worth the while to trouble my self to note them, or thee with naming them.

1

T

n  
r  
f  
t  
o  
l  
C



A P R E S E N T  
F O R  
Teeming Women, &c:

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CHAP. I.  
*Of a state of Pregnancy.*



T is observable, that the great God, who is equally infinite in all his Attributes, yet hath styled himself, *rich in mercy, glorious in holiness*. Surely he needs neither riches nor glory; He was rich enough to Himself, and glorious enough in Himself from everlasting. But behold, His *good Will towards men*, and the communicative nature of infinite goodness. Mercy enricheth us, Holiness glorifies us. By Mercy we partake of his Gifts, by Holiness we partake of his Nature. By Mercy we enjoy him, by Holiness we love him, resemble him, and glorifie him for ever. Now

Psal. 86.15  
Eph. 2. 4.  
Exod. 15.  
1 P.

these two transcendent perfections do eternally cohabite in the nature of God, and mutually concur to the benefit of man ; it is most requisite that our minds should be filled with the thoughts & influences of both. That is, that each Mercy of God should promote our Holiness, and that Holiness should increase our sense of Mercies. It being therefore my present business , that women with child may be *in a holy frame*, and thereby fitted for the hour of danger approaching, I thought good to mind them of this first, that 'tis a mercy of much value to be with child in a state of Matrimony.

That this is a mercy, will appear plainly by these few considerations.

1. 'Tis one end of marriage, that there might be a succession of generation after generation, that the race of mankind may not be confused, and disorderly, as among Beasts;   
 1 Thes. 4.4 nor extinguished, nor dishonoured; but may continue in a legitimate line, and that God Mal. 2. 13. might have a *holy seed*.

2. That it might appear to be a Mercy, God hath, by Angels, Revelations and Miracles, at sundry times, of old, assured some good women that he would give this blessing to their wombs. Thus, in Gen. 17. 16. *I will bless her, & give thee a son also of her; yea I will bless her, and she shall be a mother also of nations.* Though upon this strange promise we find Abraham full of wondering, ver. 17. and Sarah his wife laughing,

laughing, ch. 18 12. Both questioning, at first, how this could be, yet afterwards God doth renew his promise, and they lay aside any further doubt; and the word of the Lord spoken by angels was fulfilled, Gen. 21.1. The Lord visited Sarah, as he had said, and did unto Sarah as he had spoken, For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. We find of the Patriarchs also, that they found favour w<sup>t</sup>th God in like manner, concerning the fruit of their womb, ever acknowledging it as the gift of God, and adoring the gracious providence of the (a) God and Father of all men. When they blessed their posteriy they (a) Nihil de generas carefully inserted this in their prophetical prayers. This last blessing of a dying Patriarch, though it be sometime, or in some part expressed nescitur, si in form of petition, yet in the intent and effect ea non operetur Deuse thereof alway amounted to a prediction. Thus Aug. in Ps. Isaac to Jacob, God Almighty blesse thee and 118. make thee fruitfull, and multiply thee, that thou Gen. 28. mayest be a multitude of people. Thus Jacob to Joseph: Joseph is a fruitfull bough, even a Chap. 49: fruitfull bough, whose branches run over the 22.25. walls. The Almighty shall blesse thee with the blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breast, and of the womb. In which places God is still mentioned as the original of this blessing, and the supreme efficient cause of the pregnancy of the womb, and increase of posterity. It was

Judge 13.3 the same God that sent his Angel to the wife of *Manoah*, to tell her that she should conceive and bear a son. 'Tis out of question, that to these persons it was a mercy to have issue, yea, a publick blessing to many generations; for the seed of *Abraham* was the onely visible Church on earth, the onely people that turned from Idols to serve the living God. And *Sampson* the son of *Manoah* was, in his time, the onely Judge: and Champion of *Israel*, and Type of Christ. But it seems doubtfull, whether therefore all other parents can call their children Blessings; or indeed, whether the faithfull have any such cause to promise themselves comfort in their posterity, without some like revelation or testimony from heaven, as they had? To this I answer, that all the seed of *Abraham* (I mean, that continue in the faith of *Abraham*) have exceeding great and precious promises to rest satisfied in, that extend to them all, in all ages; I mean, Gods promises of giving, and blessing children to them.

3. And that shall be my third proof. If God promise distinctly, and frequently, that they shall see their posterity, and their seeds seed, then we must thankfully enumerate it among his rich favours to mankind. This was the blessing to *Adam* in innocency; God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And to *Noah*; God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto

unto them, be fruitfull, and multiply, and replenish the earth. This blessing was given them as the common parents and stocks, of whom the future generations should succeed; and therefore we find it transmitted by other Scriptures to succeeding ages, and will continue while the patience and good will of God towards man continues. Thus the Psalmist; *Loe children are an heritance of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.* Likewise in the following Psalm, *Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house, thy children like olive plants round about thy table.* Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord. Again, the Prophet Isaiah hath the same promise from God to his people *Israel*, thus emphatically expressed, *I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thy off-spring, and they shall spring up as among the grasse, as willows by the water-courses.* The like promises of multiplying their seed are frequently to be found in other Scriptures, such as those in the margin, which the diligent Reader may peruse at his leisure. These may suffice to evince the truth of this particular; That they who believe the Lords Prophets, that reverence his promises, and embrace his providences, cannot but subscribe with their hands to the Lord, and acknowledge that child-bearing is his blessing, and *children are his reward.*

4. Whatsoever the people of God have  
ordinarily

Ps. 127. 3.

Psal. 128.

3,4.

Isa. 43. 3,4

Jer. 23. 3.

Ezek. 36.

11.

Zech 2.4.

(a) *Paula* ordinarily asked of God (a) according to his  
*ante votis* will, that cannot but be a mercy when it is  
*quam utero* received. That such prayers were not unwar-  
*concepisti.* Hier. ad  
*Luit.* rrantable, is certain; for either some of them  
 were stirred up by an extraordinary instinct of  
 spirit, to ask that which God hath intended in a  
 singular and unexpected manner to give; or the  
 common spirit of supplication put the innocent  
 desire of nature into a posture of acceptation  
 with God; they asking children of him, request-  
 ed no more than the usual course of his provi-  
 dence, and the general concurrence of his pro-  
 mises aforementioned led them to expect. Abraham  
 had received the promise of children, but  
 long time being passed, and his wife not yet  
 conceiving, thoughts began to grow in his  
 mind, what the intent of God should be; and  
 therefore when God doth again renew his  
 covenant to him, he breaks out into this ear-

Gen. 15.2. nest expression, *Lord, what wilt thou give me,*  
*seeing I go childleſſe?* as if he should say,  
 Lord, thou hast given me a great estate, but I  
 have no heir; and what comfort can I take  
 in all other enjoyments, seeing the main  
 thing which thou hast promised is yet behind,

b) *B. Halls* contempl. 1.10, p. 117 and I am still childleſſe. (b) And therefore either take away these blessings, or give me  
 the chief blessing of my house, even a son to  
 be born of my wife. This prayer you know  
 God accepted, and answered according to  
 his desire, even then when his body was old,  
 and his wife, *by nature*, uncapable of concer-  
 ving.

ving. I suppose this dealing of God with *Abraham his friend*, and the father of the fafhfull, put some life in the hopes of his pofturity, who in the next and fucceeding gene-  
rations, did seek to God in the like cafe. His  
fon *Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because Gen.35.  
she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of 21.*  
*him, and Rebeccah his wife conceived, &c.*  
When *Rachel had no children, she laid unto*  
*Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. Mark Gen.30.*  
*his anfwer, Am I in Gods ftead, who hath 1,2.*  
*withholden from thee the fruit of the womb?*  
as if he had laid, Look to the fupreme caufe,  
to the everlasting Father, and go to him by  
prayer, and beg this bleffing of him; and then,  
if God anfwer thy request, thou wilt be a mo-  
ther of children. And no queſtion but ſhe  
thus did; for afterwards it is ſaid, that *God re- Gen.30.*  
*membred Rachel, and hearkened to her, (that is,*  
*he anſwered her prayers) and opened her  
womb, and ſhe conceived. The like course was 22.*  
long after taken by others, especially by *Han-*  
*nah, who having no children, prayed with no*  
*little earnestneſſe, yea, poured out her ſoul in*  
*this buſineſſ, That God would look upon his 1 Sam.1.*  
*handmaid, and remember her, and not forget 11.17.*  
*her, and give her a man-child. And old Eli*  
*feonds this requeſt, and adds, The Lord of*  
*Israel grant thee thy petition that thou haſt*  
*asked of him. And ſhe conceived and bare a ſon,*  
*and called him Samuel, becauſe ſhe had an-  
ked him of the Lord.*

I need add no more to this particular, but  
that God himself commanded his people to  
seek him for the performance of his promise,  
*Ezek. 36.* *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be  
inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for  
them; I will increase them with men like a flock.*  
*37.*

So that if Gods command be any motive to  
prayer, or his promise any encouragement to  
faith, then they had ground enough both for  
faith and prayer.

5 Barrennes of the wombe was frequently  
in Scripture threatned as a judgment; and  
they that felt this evil did earnestly bewaile it  
as no small affliction, therefore fruitfullnesse  
must needs be a considerable mercy. 'Twas

*Gen. 20.  
37. 18.  
\*See Bishop Richard-  
son on the Pentateuch  
in Locum.  
Gen. 15.  
2. & 30. 1.  
1 Sam. 1.  
5. 6.  
Leviticus.  
20. 20. 21.  
So also of  
Tyre  
Isa. 23. 4.  
Isa. 4. 1.* *That seven  
men should take hold of one man.* That is,  
though Marriage and Majesty endure no com-  
peers, yet the Wars should so consume the  
male sex, that many women should sollicite  
one man (*contrary to the innate modesty of*  
*that*)

that sex) and be content with any terms, *viz.*  
*to eat their own bread, and weare their own apparell,* that is, to be no charge to him for  
any thing; onely let us be called by thy name,  
*to take away our reproach;* that is, let us be  
accounted and used as thine, and why? to  
take away our reproach; so that barrenness  
was esteemed no small reproach. For God in  
blessing *Israel* tellis them, *that none should be barren amongst them, but that they should be blessed above all people, and that there shall not be a male or female barren among them, nor among their cattell.* When the Lord would punish *Coniah*, this is the punishment; write ye this man childeſſe; whether he were without posterity, or they without prosperity, or succession to his throne, is not materiall to the businesſe in hand; it sufficeth, that the ex-  
pression takes it for granted, that to be child-  
leſſe was a curse, and a reproach in *Israel*. So  
that, of *Michal* (the daughter of *Saul*) who  
mocked *David*, it is mentioned, as a memo-  
rable and severe judgment, *that she had no child to the day of her death.*

Exod. 23.

26.

Deut. 7.

14.

Jer. 22.

30.

2 Sam 6.

25.

6 God hath, in his Scriptures, ever taken to himself the praise of this work; and his people have ever acknowledged it as his gift & mercy, when they conceived and bare children. Thus the wives of *Jacob*. Thus *Jacob* himself, answering his brother *Esau*; these are the children which God bath graciously gi- c. 35. 5.  
*ven thy servant.* Thus *Hannah*, *Elizabeth*, and

Gen. 30.

6. 17. 22.

and others, still their phrase is, God opened  
*Psal. 113.* their wombs, God rolled away their reproach,  
*Facundicas* God gave them cbildren &c. He maketh the  
*fæminarum* barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyfull  
*& casta* mother of children. Seeing, therefore, by  
*vota filios* this cloud of Scripture-testimonies 'tis evident,  
*desideran-* that women are not with child but by the  
*tium ad* mercy and gift of God, I must adde a few in-  
*quem per-* ferences from what I have said.

*ad Domini-* 1 That none be dejected at a state of bar-  
*nnum De-* rennesse, though among the *Jews* it was e-  
*mum? Aug.* stemed so great an affliction. If the age of  
*Emarr. in* one or both parties render you not uncapable,  
*Psal. 66.* you may with modesty and moderation make  
 your request known to God, and then rest  
 satisfied in his pleasure concerning you. For  
 though the posterity of *Abraham* did all desire  
 that the promised seed might come of them  
 (*as some do uncertainly conjecture*) and had  
 also too high esteem of temporal blessings,  
 and carnal apprehensions of promised bles-  
 sungs did much possesse the mind of the gener-  
 ality; yet we are now under a *better testament*,  
 containing exceeding great and precious promi-  
 ses of things *Spiritual*. If therefore we stick  
 too much on the letter of old-Testament pro-  
 mises, we shall commit as great an error in  
 our faith, as the *Jews*, by resting in the bare let-  
 ter of the precepts, ran into gross error in their  
 practice. God never delighted in their most  
 glorious and costly ceremonies, unlesse they  
 gave him their hearts; and now he accepts of

internal worship with simplicity and spirituality of mind, without any further desire of those pompous observations. So let us learn to worship God without their Rites, and to love God though without their mercies. Let us count riches and posterity nothing without God, and God sufficient without either of them. If Christ be ours, every thing needfull is ours. If we be the Sons and Daughters of God, it shall be no unhappinesse, if we have neither Sons nor Daughters of our own. There is then no curse in what we have, no need of what we have not. <sup>John 4: Rem. 14.</sup> Where naturall impossibilities doe hinder the fecundity of the wombe, they should also (if known) have hindred marriage. But when the sterility is meerly accidentall, from some such present prevailing infirmity as discomposes the body of either party; it may by the blessing of God upon medicinall helps be lawfully and success-  
 fully removed. But when the cause is unknown, and unfruitfullnesse seems meerly judicall, viz. immediately inflicted by the hand of God, in that case, prayer is the proper course, that he who *shuts the womb*, as he did the wombs in the house of *Abimelech* would *open them again*, as he did theirs upon the prayer of *Abraham*. It may be, he will grant thy petition, as he hath done of some that for above twenty years in a state of marriage went childlesse, yet at last he made the solitary to dwell in families, and gave them children

*Dr. Gouge  
of domest.  
duties.*

*Luke 1.*

*13.*

*Psal. 10.17.*

*Psal. 145.*

*19.*

Perkins

Cas. of

consc. lib.

2. c. 6. qu.

4.

Reinolds

on Hos. 14.

r. 2. Serm.

1. p. 53.

John 5.

19.

(c) Deus

non semp̄

audiet ad

voluntatem

vel voln-

tatem, at

Semp̄ ex-

audiet ad

salutem.

Isidor. de

summō bo-

w. l. 3 c. 3.

(d) Ward

in Mat. 8.

ag. 451.

(e) Bonus

qui non tri-

uit quod

volumus, ut

tribuat

quod malis

mus. Aug.

epist. 34.

(f) Mat.

22. 30.

children like olive plants round about their table. Or perhaps he will not yet answer thee, to exercise thy faith, prayer, and dependence in waiting upon him; or perhaps, he will deny thee this mercy at last, to exercise thy patient submissiveness to his Will, and thy heavenly-mindedness, and wisdom in seeking some better blessing. Sure it is, *thy pray-  
ers shall returne into thine own bosom* with some answer of peace; and if we aske aright, we shall receive (c) according to Gods choice, if not according to our own. He hath variety of blessings, which, like the stars of heaven, differ from one another in glory. Therefore blesse his name, if by this providence he promote in thy heart humility, faith, patience, or any other grace; (d) seeing its better to be fruitfull in grace, then fruitfull in children. If he give us his favour (e) thats a blessing of more value. *The Angels neither marry, nor are given in marriage,* yet have happinesse enough in God. Let him be to thee worth ten Sons. In a word, I say of these certain cares, and uncertain comforts, that he who hath none of them hath lesse incumbrance here, and lesse to reckon for hereafter.

2. Tis an addition to the mercy, when God gives children in a state of marriage. Tis a mercy to be kept in a single estate from the unclean libidinous practices of beastly sinnes; and to be at last happily entred upon that state of matrimony, which God appointed and hath

hath sanctified as his ordinance, for preventing of fornication ; and 'tis also, I say, a greater blessing, when he is pleased to Crown the chaste embraces of wedlock with a hopefull conception. Oh how dreadfull are the scripturee-xamples of many women, whom God having partly or totally left to their vile affections and inordinate lusts, having prostituted their chastity, brought shame upon Israel, and disparaged the innate modesty of the female sex ; grew at last past feeling, and spent their life in common whoredome, till their sin was come to a ripeness : But alas, in these last days, the sin of incontinency is grown more perillous by its commonnes, and also by the impunity of our intemperate Grandees, whose example herein gives a law to others. And surely those who are privileged from punishment here, shall find it a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, who hath said, whoremongers and adulterers will judge, i.e. though the secrecy of their actions, the potency of their persons, or the negligence of Magistrates, may secure them for a while ; yet there is nothing so secret but is under his eye; nothing so great, but is under his power. And therefore in that day of vengeance the works of darknesse shall be brought to light, and the loftinesse of man shall be brought low ; and they who were on earth inflamed with lust, shall smart for ever in the flames of hell ; unless with tears of repen-  
 tance

<sup>1 Cor.7,</sup>

<sup>2,3,4,5.</sup>

<sup>2 Tim. 3:</sup>

<sup>1,3.</sup>

<sup>Heb 10.31</sup>

<sup>I Hcb.13.4.</sup>

<sup>1 Cor.4.5</sup>

<sup>Isa.2. 17.</sup>

<sup>1 Cor.6.9.</sup>

tance they quench these fires of concupi-  
scence, and with water drawn out of the wells  
of salvation quench those (otherwise) ever-  
lasting burnings. But to return to my purpose;

*Isa. 2.3:*

*Isa. 33.14.*

I mentioned before the dreadfulness of the  
examples in this kind recorded in Scripture;  
and verily when I read the Polygamy of *Lamech* a murtherer, I wonder not; but consider-  
ing the polygamy of the Patriarchs, of

*Gen. 4.19.*

*David*, and the licentious excess of *Solomon*,  
*I stand amazed at their irregularity, and Gods connivance and longanimity.* When I read the  
incest of *Absalom*, and *Herod*, I wonder not;  
but when I think of *Lot*, *Judah*, and the ince-  
stuous *Corinthian*, my soul trembles. We

*1 Cor. 5:*

*1,2,&c.*

*B. Halls*

*Contempl.*

*I. 10. p. 182*

*Perkins*

*Case of*

*conf. I. 2.c.*

*qu. 3. p. 89*

*Judg. II.*

*36,37.*

*Psal. 78.63*

*Isa. 13.16.*

*Lam. 5.11*

*Zech. 14.2*

parents, or by some remedilels accident, are  
kept all their life from marrying, as was the  
daughter of *Jephtha*, and others; whose con-  
ditions are represented in sacred story, as most  
sad and deplorable. But they are most ge-  
nerally pitied and lamented of all, who desir-  
ing to possess their vessels in sanctification  
and honour, are surprized by some lecherous,  
villain, ravished and deflowered. A judgement

(a) sometimes threatned in Scripture, as a  
fruit of Gods greater indignation, against that

people whom he thus leaves to the licentio-

ous

ous power of barbarous enemies. ( See the places in the margin ) Yet I count them *most miserable*, who having yielded their bodies to venereous abuses in their youth, are with child by whoredom, and are either disappointed of marriage with their wicked lover, or marry not till their shame appears.

For who can expresse their manifold feares, cares and sorrows? one while, perhaps, they hide their sin (as long as they can) but still while they muse, *a fire burns within them*, and they feel the pangs of an accusing conscience, before they feel the pangs of their travel. Unlesse their hearts be *harder than the nether millstone*; which if it be, their misery is the greater. Sometimes they contrive wayes of preventing its birth by wicked adventuring on such *expulsive receipts*, as may prevent their shame. Or perhaps they are plodding how to make away the infant, as soon as it is born; (a) Bishop or at best, to expose it secretly, that the Parish Halls may keep it. Or if it be safely born, and the parent acknowledge it, yet while it lives 'tis an (a) indecible monument of their infamous trans- gression. For which cause, (b) (even for their future shame) God suffers unlawfull commix- tions to take effect.

(a) Bishop  
lib. 10. p. 162.

(b) Engl.  
Annot. on Gen. 19.

36.

I could willingly have enlarged on this point, and given exhortations, warnings, and directions, to women in this sad condition; but perceiving that my little treatise begins to swell beyond my expectation, I shall preter- mit

mit it for the present (intending, if God will, to write distinctly and purposely of that subject, because I know not of any that hath done it;) only what I have already said may give just occasion to chaste virgins, to pray for *the gift of continency*; and to honest women, when with child, to praise God for preserving them from the sin and misery aforementioned, and granting them conception by their own husbands, in the comfortable estate of Matrimony. For we have all alike wicked hearts, and therefore ought to give glory to God, who onely *makes us to differ.*

**I Cor. 4.7**

3. Though it be a choice mercy, yet it is not to be interpreted as a sure token of Gods love. *No man knowes Gods love or hatred by any external comforts.* They are distinguished alike to the good and bad, to the just and

(a) *Lud. vives, in Aug. de Civ. Dei l. 15. c. 8.*

(a) A learned man reports of a town in Spain, consisting of a hundred families, all inhabited by the seed of one old man then living; so that the youngest knew not what to call him, the Spanish tongue having no expression higher then the great Grandfathers Father. To reckon up the numerous issue of some prolific parents mentioned in profane Histories, is as needless as easy. Scripture also doth abundantly satisfy in this, that *the wicked also are full of children;* so that outward blessings do not alway make a blessed man.

**Psa. 17.14**  
(b) *Spen. cers things new and old, p. 107.*

(b) But lest they should be accounted evil, God sometimes gives them

to

to his people; and lest they should be accounted our chief good, he sometime bestows them upon the wicked.

4. I cannot see how those women can be mindfull of the mercy of God, in granting them conception, that (a) either refuse (without necessary impediment) to nurse their children themselves, or count many children a burden, and are therefore grieved (if having many children already) they find themselves with child again. Doth not (b) even nature teach us, that the sea-monsters draw out their breasts and give suck to their young? doth not the Lion with infinite pains and hazard seek prey for his young ones? doth not the Halcyon sit close on her eggs (c) and while the weather holds fair, ply their nourishment with all diligence, whence good dayes are called *Halcyon days*? Is this therefore their thankfulness to God for so great a mercy, to refuse to embrace in their arms, and nourish at their breasts, the fruit of their womb, when God joyned the blessings of the breast and the blessings of the womb together.

(d) Doth the God of Nature make Ladies and Gentlwomen without breasts, or doth he give them breasts in vain, or will they immediately go with naked breasts, and yet be ashamed to use them?

(a) *Quid est hoc contra naturam, imperfectum ac dimidiatum, matrem genas peperisse. & statim abjecisse, aluisse in utero sanguine suo nescio quid quod non viderit, non alere autem nunc suo latere quod videat jam viventem, jam hominem, jam matris officia implorantem, &c.*

Aul. Gell. noct. Attr. lib. 12 cap. 1.

(b) 1 Cor. 11.14.

Lam. 4.3.

(c) Ulfiss. Aldrovandi, Ornithol. l. 20

Plin. nat. hist. lib. 20. cap. 32.

(d) Charon lib. 3. cap. 14 p. 458.

Rom. 1. Is it not a prodige in nature, to see a woman  
 Isa. 49. 15. without breasts? and is it not as foul a defect  
 Ps. 131. 2. to be without natural affection? what greater  
 Exod. 2. 9. folœcism in manners, then for a woman to  
 Mat. 2. 11. forget her sucking child? verily this makes  
 some of our proudest Dames more vile then the  
 beasts that perish. And therefore, let all per-  
 sons of honour cease hereafter to glory in  
 their shame; and let them think it their duty,  
 when God makes them mothers, to make  
 themselves nurses; imitating the example of  
 (a) Engl. Sarah, who, though a Lady of great (a) e-  
 Annot. on steme, riches and honour, though aged and  
 Gen. 11. weak, yet refused not this motherly office.  
 And they, that upon any account, but plain  
 necessity (i.e. want of strength or milk) do  
 neglect this duty, whether for laziness, lust,  
 pride, or loving the fashion more then their  
 children, they deserve that God should curse  
 Hos. 9. 14. them with a miscarrying wombe and dry  
 breasts.

But there is another folly too common,  
 and that is, if they have a great charge of  
 children already, to wish and resolve to have  
 no more, and to be cast down with grief and  
 anxious care, if they find themselves with  
 child again. Alas, what is this but to repine at  
 Gods mercies, and to murmur at his bles-  
 sings? what greater dishonour can we put  
 upon the Word of God, which sayes, *Happy*  
 is he that hath his quiver full of them? Besides,  
 who knows, but that this last child may be an  
 eminent

eminent instrument to Gods glory, a vessel of use in his generation, and a blessing to the whole family ? But so much for the first point; That it is a mercy to be with child.

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## C H A P. II.

*Prayer, The duty of women with child.*

I Have been longer then I intended on the first Chapter, to prove, that it is a mercy for women to be with child, I shall endeavour to be more brief in the things following; which are the severall duties that pertain to women in that estate. If they make any conscience of fitting themselves for their travell, or would have any hope of Gods assistance therein, I shal desire them to give heed to the Scripture-rules here gathered by my serious care, for their direction and consolation.

And I shall begin with that which they must begin with, go on with, and end with; and that is, Prayer.

And seeing there be many requisites, that concur to render a prayer acceptable, I shall instance in some few, and pass by the rest, which are many, and are largely handled by other Authors.

You must be carefull to direct your prayers to the right object, that is, to the whole Trinity,

Dr. George  
of domestic  
duties, tr.  
6. p. 508.

(a) *Percius cas. of confc. lib.* To God the Father, in the name of Christ,  
 2. c. 4. q. 1. by the assistance of his Spirit. (a) Not but  
 (b) *Cob.* proper to invoke the second, or third person of  
 beth treat. the trinity; but usually we are to aske of the  
 part 3. cb. Father, in the name of Christ, and to such  
 12. p. 54. asking is his promise made. But that which  
 Mar. 28. 19. I chiefly aime at, is to warne you to call upon  
 Joh. 16. 23. God onely, (b) and not upon any Saint or An-  
 (c) *Perkins ubi supra. c. 6. qu. 1. § 2* gel, as the manner is among Idolatrous Pa-  
 pists; whose d<sup>r</sup>evotions are divided among so  
 (d) Aug. many Saints, that 'tis no easy matter to reckon  
 de Civ. Dei their meer n<sup>a</sup>es. Let it suffice us, that this their  
 2. 8. c. 18. folly hath nothing of warrant from the Scrip-  
 21. lib. 9. ture, but is meerly derived c from the practice  
 c. 9. 17. of those vile heathens, who not liking to retain  
 (e) Dr. Beard of Antichrist. God in their knowledge, became vain in their  
 tr. 2. part. imaginations (d). As the Ethnicks had several  
 3. c. 3. p. 340 Countries, sciences, callings and diseases; so  
 341. &c. have the papists assigned a particular Saint for  
 (f) also Nascio, Partunda, the Heathens, to give deliverance from the  
 Ageria, and many pains in child-birth, and the Papists have gi-  
 more. m<sup>o</sup>ven this office of chief midwife to St. Mar-  
 Rosses garet. (f) And the better to colour the busines,  
 view of all they tell us a story in theirs *Legenda aurea*,  
 religious ( which with many other of like credit were  
 4. pag. 126 taken out of that lying Greeke, Simeon Meta-  
 (g) Medes phrastes) 'that this St. Margaret suffering  
 apostacy of the latter Martyrdom under Dioclesian, as she was pre-  
 times. p. paring to die prayed to God, that whoso-  
 129. 130. ever

'ever should worship the Tabernacle of her  
 'Body, and build an oratory *in her name*,  
 'and therein offer spiritual sacrifice, yea that  
 'who should read or remember her name,  
 'might have *remission of sin*, and deliverance  
 'from all evill, with much more to the same  
 'purpose. And presently there was a great  
 'Earthquake, and the Lord Hjmselv with a  
 'host of holy Angels, standing by her, said  
 'to her, be of good cheere, and feare not, for  
 'I have heard thy prayers, I have fulfilled,  
 'and will in due time fulfill, whatsoever thou  
 hast asked, even as thou hast asked it. But  
 if this Goddesse be not sufficient, yet they  
 have their *Lady Mary*, for an universal medi-  
 atrix, to whom they, without the least shame  
 of their *wretched blasphemy*, attribute as much  
 as to God the Father, and Jesus Christ, as  
 may be seen by their many fragments of pray-  
 ers to her, *in their missals, rosaryes, and our*  
*Ladyes Psalter*. And lest any should doubt  
 of present help from the Virgin, they tell  
 many wicked unclean stories of her not fit to  
 be transcribed; and among the best *this is*  
 one; (a) That a holy Abbesse, notwithstanding  
 'her vow and pretence of chastity, was (*as the*  
 'manner is *in their unneryes*) got with child, (b) witness  
 'and the Virgin *Mary* came and plaid the mid-  
 'wife for her, and sent the bastard by two  
 'Angels to a certain hermite to be brought  
 up. (b) Sure this bastard had good luck, to  
 escape the common cruelty of those Nuns, who

(a) Vinc.  
cent. hist.  
lib. 7. c. 86.

(b) witness  
the Anatoma-  
my of the  
English  
Nunnery  
at Lisbone  
in Portu-  
gal. p. 12

use for the most part to kill, and then to convey into some secret place, their base-borne infants. But I hope the very naming of these foul absurdities will alienate any Christian Heart from praying to St. Mary, or St. Margaret, in this or any other extremity; but rather let them resolve, with the woman of Canaan, to come to Christ. Of whom (a) Chrysostome observes (three or four times) that she came to Christ without any mediator, and had a happy answer. And (b) another Ancient reckons the worship of the blessed Virgin, or any other Saints, a doctrine of devils.

Sure it is, that the Son of God who hath one Will, and one Essence with the Father, and whom God beareth alway, hath graciously authorised us to aske in his name, with exceeding great and precious promises, that it shall be given them, that they shall find, and that it shall be opened unto them. And as sure I am, that there is none in heaven besids him, nor any other name given under heaven; for there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. He is the way, the truth, and the life. The way, whereby our prayers have access into the Fathers presence; the truth, whereby the Fathers Will is revealed to us; and the life, whereby we enjoy the glory and presence of God for ever. Now, who w ould desire to walke by star

(a) Ushers

Answ. to come to Christ.  
the Irish Jesuit. p.  
416.

Epiphanius.  
her. 78.

John. 14.  
13. ch 16.  
16,13,24.

1 Tim. 2,5.

Heb. 7, 25.

star-light, when the Sun shines at noon day; or to be beholden to the borrowed righteousness of any Romish Saints, when the Sun of righteousness himself is risen with healing in his wings? If our Saint-worship were tolerable, methinks it should have been in the dayes of *Moses*, and the Prophets; but our adversaries the Papists do confess, that this Doctrine and practice was then altogether unkown. And if the *Israel* of God did never petition *Abraham*, *Isaac*, or *Jacob*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, or *Job*, to intercede for them; much lesse doth this foolery become us, to whom a Saviour is born, and to whom a Son is given, who by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, i. e. hath made perfect provision for his Saints, that their prayers shall through him be received while they live, and their souls received when they die. Therefore let others, if they will not be dissuaded, fetch a compasse about by the mediation of canonized Saints; but let us who have received the truth as it is in Jesus, hold fast our profession, and goe by him onely to the Father.

*Eph. 4.21.*  
*Heb 4.14.*  
*John 6.*  
*45.14.6.*

In a word; They that expect the least crumb of comfort by the mediation of Saints shall speed no better then *Dives*, in beseeching *Abraham* for a drop of water to coole his tongue in hell. But leaving these wretches to their incurable folly, let us proceed.

*Luk. 16.*  
*24.*

Tis not sufficient for women, or any other, to pretend a good heart towards God, but they

Rom 8.26 Must also offer him the calves of their lips. I confess, the chief requisite of a praying Christian is to lift up the heart to God, in desires and groans that cannot be uttered, to flee to him for help in distress, and to make him our rock of defence. As the Israelites, when affliction was upon them, they remembred that

Psal.78.35 God was their rock, and the most high God  
 (a) Per- their redeemer. (a) Of this the Apostle speaks,  
 kins cases Pray continually, that is, mentally; but, I  
 of Consc. say, this is not all, we must glorifie God with  
 lib.2.c.5. our bodies and spirits, which are his; we must

Lam.3.41 Lam.3.41 lift up our hands with our hearts to God in the  
 Isa.62.7. heavens; we must bow our knees to the father  
 of our Lord Jesus Christ, and not keep silence,  
 but utter our requests with our tongues, and  
 open our mouths, that our lips may utter his  
 praise, and that we may with verbal expresssions  
 quicken our selves, in making our requests  
 known to him, with supplication and prayer. We  
 must offer our strong cries, and smite on our  
 breasts, with the Publican, and bemoane our  
 selves, with Ephraim, and seek the Lord with  
 weeping, and with supplication.

As for the many qualifications required in the Person and Duty, I shall summen them up in the words of a most learned Divine. (b) God  
 Dr. Reynolds is so holy, and jealous of his worship, that he  
 on Hos.14. expects there should be preparation in our  
 p.13. accesses to him. Preparation of our persons,  
 Job 11.13 by purity of life; preparation of our services,  
 Luke 15. by choice of matter; preparation of our  
 17.18. hearts,

'hearts, by finding them out, stirring them <sup>2 Sam. 7.</sup>  
 'up, fixing them, fetching them <sup>27.</sup> in, and cal-  
 'ling together all that is within us to prevail  
 'with God. (And a little after, he addes) <sup>Isa. 64.7.</sup>  
 'We must attend to Gods will, as the rule of  
 'our prayers, to his precepts & promises, for  
 'the matter of our prayers, &c to the guidance  
 'of his holy Spirit, as the life and principle of  
 'our prayers, without which we know not  
 'what to ask. Prayers thus regulated are  
 'most seasonable and sovereign duties in  
 'times of trouble. The key which openeth a  
 'door of mercy; the sluice which keepeth out  
 'an inundation of judgements. *Jacob* wre-  
 'stled, and obtained a blessing, *Amos* prayed,  
 'and removed a curse. The woman of  
 'Canaan will not be denied with a de-  
 'nial.

As for other circumstances, conditions, modes, and concomitants of Prayer, as Faith, Humility, Sincerity, Importunity, Patience, &c. I shall refer the Reader to those many English Authors, which have purposely and profitably handled this subject, and so crave leave to go on to what follows.

## C H A P. III.

*Repentance the duty of women with child.*

**R**epentance is never out of season, except with Esau and Judas we go about it too late. 'Tis the common duty of all, whether married, or unmarried, whether with child, or not, to renew the daily practice of Repentance; but, as the Scriptures abundantly testify, it is most especially requisite, when afflictions are felt or feared, and dangers approach; so that it must needs be seasonable for women, in this condition, to renew their repentance without delay. For whereas it is unsafe to trust to our former repentance, lest it be found defective and unsound, therefore the safest course is to repent again and again. Who among the daughters of Eve can remember the sin of her who was first in the transgression, without shame and sorrow? And yet while you blame her folly in eating the forbidden fruit, the guilt thereof, without repentance, will redound upon your selves. Her sin was turning from the Creator to the Creature; Repentance is a returning from sin, self, the world, and the tempter, to God. And while you carry a burthen in your womb, then, if ever, you had need to be eased of the heavier burthen of sin, which cannot be done with-

out repentance. You must repent of the miscarriages of your lives, if you would be provided against the danger of a miscarrying womb. You must willingly endure the pangs of repentance, if you would safely bear the pangs of your travel. You must use your self to godly sorrow in the time of your strength, if you expect any comfort from God in the hour of your pain. You must humble your self before God, if you desire that God should then raise you up. You must take out the sting of sin by repentance, and then afflictions cannot hurt you. In your health remember your sin, and God will in judgement remember mercy.

And I therefore subjoyn this duty of re-pentance, next after prayer, because, if we regard iniquity in our hearts, he heareth us not, but is of purer eyes then to behold iniquity. So that if we pray without repenting hearts, we do but mock God, and deceive our selves. We cannot draw nigh to him in truth, nor will he draw nigh to us in mercy, unless we withdraw our selves from iniquity, and be at the greatest elongation from sinne that can be.

Ps. 66. 18.  
Hab. 1. 13.

But this repentance must be univerſal, for all ſin. (a) For one leak will ſink a ſhip, one wound strikes Geliab dead, as well as three and twenty did Caſar; one Dalilah will do Sampſon as much miſchief as all the Philiſtines; one wheel broken disorders a whole clock; one vein's bleeding, if not ſtanched,

will

(a) Spencers things new and old. p. 298  
1117.

will let out the life ; one fly will spoil a whole box of ointment ; by eating one apple Adam lost Paradise ; one Achan was a trouble to all Israel ; one Jonah, if faulty, is a lading too heavy for one ship. So one sin causes too much injury to God, and brings too much guilt and burthen upon the conscience,

(a) Tho: (b) If seven thieves enter the house, six of them being overcome, and the seventh lurking in some corner, the Master of that house is still in danger. If the bird, or the mouse, be held in the snare, though but by one leg, their whole body is in danger. Thus all sin, and the least sin, must be repented of.

*Exo. io26.* Pharaoh would let the people go, after he had endured many plagues, so as they would leave their sheep and their cattel behind them. So Satan would keep something of sin in us, which may be as a pledge of our returning to him again. And we would willingly, when we are convinced of the necessity of repentance, yet roll some sweet morsel under our tongues, and be excused in one or two of our incurable sins ; but if we will, in earnest, forsake the Egyptian bondage of sin, we must resolve, with Moses, that not a hoof shall be left behind us, but all iniquity put away out of our hands, and all our ungodly words left off,

(c) Ulf. and all our wicked thoughts forsaken, and all Aldrov. imaginable wickedness mourned for, and by Ornitb. I. degrees relinquished. (c) As the Dove feares 34. every feather of the Eagle, and the skin of a

Lion

Lion stuffed with straw will make the lesser beasts to keep a distance; so all the circumstances, occasions, reliques and appearances of sin, must be bewailed, suspected, and avoided. For as a woman delivered of her child is not out of danger while the after-birth remains; so a repenting soul discovering, confessing, and forsaking some sins, is not yet safe, if there be a reserve of other sins. And while your body is yet in any strength, you should set about this necessary work of repentance, without delay. For the bitterness and weight of sin must be tasted and felt one time or other; (d) so that, as a Landlord takes a greater fine of his Tenant at first, and the lesse rent afterwards: So the more time, care, and tears you spend in repentance at first, the less it will cost you to renew it afterwards. But if you still put it off, till your travel comes suddenly upon you, at best you run a great hazard, and lade your self with such a burthen, and incur your soul into such danger, from which it will be more difficult to be delivered, than from the peril it self, of child-bearing. So that if your body and soul should both miscarry, and die together, God is just, and *your blood will be on your own head*, for your former neglect of the time and space of repentance.

Besides this, which chiefly concerns your self, the consideration of the child which you carry in your womb should quicken you to repentance, as soon as you feel it quick with-

(c) Hyer.  
Drexelii  
Gymnas  
taen.

Ezek. 33  
4.

in

in you : For, as the fancy, and longing of a woman with child doth sometimes make such strange impressions on the child in the womb, that it carries some sign thereof after its birth; And as the hurt, bruise, or fall of a woman, in that condition, makes her child sometimes imperfect, monstrous, cripded, or deformed, to the day of its death ; so you should fear, lest the sin of your soul, by nature, transmit some like foul disposition, and leave some such spot on your child, as shall be a stain to his name, and a blemish to your family. Lest your corruptions prove innate qualities in him ; lest you have eaten ~~sowre~~<sup>ripe</sup> grapes, and your childrens teeth be set on edge.

Ezek 18.2 You should also take care to prevent the curse of God on your child, for your sake. Think with your self, if God should say to me

Gen.16.11 as to Hagar, Behold, thou art with child, and 12. shalt bear a son, and he shall be a wild man, his hand will be against every man, and every mans hand against him.

Would you not count your self unhappy, in being the mother of so desperate a child? Have you not also read

Hos.9.11, what God sayes of Ephraim, Their glory shall flee away as a bird from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception ; though they bring forth children, yet I wil bereave them, they

shall bring forth children to the murtherer. The meaning is, that the judgements of God should light on their posterity in a most severe and

and dreadful manner ; his curse should be upon them in the womb, and appear in their destruction, as soon as they were born. Info-  
 much that the Prophet being exceedingly troubled at the thought thereof, prays, in the next words ; *Give them, O Lord, what wilt thou give them ? give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts.* That is, seeing of two evils unavoidable, the least is most eligible ; let it please the Lord, if he will not remove, yet to alter, or mitigate his curse. If I may not pray for good to this people, let me intreat for a more tolerable evil. Let them therefore, O Lord, rather not conceive or bring forth, then to see them butchered and slain by their merciless enemies, or exposed to such heavy calamities as might make them to wish that they had never been, or that our wombs had been their graves. Now seeing this is threatened them for their sins, and is written for your admonition, fear, therefore, *lest God do so to you, and more also.* And for the prevention of these miseries on your unborn infants, *take with you words, and turn to the Lord, that bee may take away all iniquity, and receive you graciously.*

But in this practice of repentance, you must take heed and beware of the leaven of Pope-  
 ry ; for you need not make auricular confes-  
 sion to a Priest, nor seek Popish absolution  
 from a Confessor, nor expect their injunction  
 of some tedious or ridiculous penance, nor  
 esteem

esteem penance a Sacrament, nor undertake a fruitless or idolatrous pilgrimage, or think to satisfie God by some good works for any sin past, nor be at cost to purchase an indulgence, or to buy a pardon from that man of sinne.

**I. Joh. 1.9**

**Psal. 38.**

**Ex. 32.5.**

**Isa. 33.24.**

Onely be faithfull and just in confession to God, and he will be faithful to forgive. Yea, as soon as thou resolvest in thine heart, with David, no longer to conceal thy transgressions, but to acknowledge them to God, he will forgive.

**Jer. 31.18.** Renew this practice as often, and with as much sorrow and contrition, as you can; and the Father of mercies will surely heare thee bemoaning thy self, & wil remember thine iniquity no more. And therefore abound in secret

**Psal 85.8.** mourning, till thou hearest what God will

**Isa. 32.6.** speak, he will speak peace to his people; but let them not return again to folly. Make it, therefore, thy chief aim in repenting, to be

**Ezek. 36.26.** renewed in the inner parts, to have a new heart, and a new spirit, that so all old things

**2 Cor. 5.17.** may passe away, and all things become new. Whereas, if you spend never so much time

**Eph. 4. 24** and strength in confession, lamentation, and supplication, and yet your heart unchanged, you will, notwithstanding, return, with the swine, to her wallowing in the mire. How many such penitents hath the Church been pestered with? many men in sickness, many women, when neer their travel, have seemed serious converts, and have uttered many penitential desires and purposes, both to God and

man;

man; but when once they are delivered, they forget their obligations to God, and suffer Mat. ix. 45 seven worse devils to enter. And therefore make as sure work with your deceitful hearts as you can, by mournful confession, severe mortification, more holy conversation, &c.

(a) Communicate your zeal to (a) Thus should good others, reprove, rebuke, exhort, women make amends and warn your family, night and for their first offence, day, with tears, bring forth fruit Eve no sooner received meet for repentance, that others an ill motion, but she may see you have been with Jesus. delivers it to Adam; so This do, and continue doing, receive good, but they while you yet are upon your legs, should impart it. Bish. and while you have breath in Hall's Contemplation, lib. your nostrils, and then you shall <sup>10 p. 195.</sup> find your labour not in vain in the Lord, but a means to support you under bodily labour, Then you shall see of the travel of your soul, when God shall assist you in the hour of travel. Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be intent and sedulous in this great work of making peace with God, and he will deliver you in that critical hour, and raise you <sup>Psal. 50. 19</sup> up, that you may glorify him.

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**Psal 85. 8.**

**I. Ia. 32. 6.**

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**Ezek. 36. 26.**

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**Eph. 4. 24**

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## C H A P. IV.

*Reading of Scriptures the duty of women  
with child.*

(a) Qui  
vix cum  
Dux semper  
vix, semper  
dicit orare  
et legere.  
Ang: de  
temp. Ser.  
3.

**G**od gave no small gift to the world, in giving the light of the Sun, which among visible creatures is the highest emblem of his own Essence and glory: without which the whole earth would languish, and be worse then a howling wilderness. But it was a greater, to give to our souls understanding and immortality, whereby we transcend all sublunary creatures, and are capable of communion with God and his Angels: without which we could never aspire to Heaven above, but must have been slaves to the meanest creatures upon earth. And yet it was a far richer benefit to mankind, to give us the written Word, and the greatest (next to Jesus Christ, the essential Word) which the Father of Lights could have bestowed on the world; in comparison of its greater glory, the light of the Sun hath no glory. By this our understandings are made wise, and our immortality made happy.

The Scriptures are the mysteries of Gods eternal counsel, the protraicture of those infinite perfections, that lay hidden in his breast from all eternity, the written copy of that Law  
God

God, which was originally written in the heart of *Adam*; the onely supreme rule of good and evil. They contain such knowledge as will enlarge, ravish, and transform a teachable and studious soul. In the volumn of this book, it is written of Christ, that God of Gods, that Head of Angels, that King of Kings, whose Incarnation is the Mysterie of Mysterie, and whose work of Redemption is the summe of all Mercies. In a word, in them is an exact map of the Heavenly Canaan, an exact delineation of the way thereunto, and a full account of the deeds and evidences of our inheritance therein.

Psal. 40. 1.

How abominable, then, is the blasphemy of the apostate Papists, (a) who equal the Pope, or a Council, or Traditions with the Scripture, and speak dishonourably of the authority and sufficiency of the sacred Volumn? And how intolerable is that bloudy crew, which will inflict the most cruel deaths on those of the Laity that procure a Bible in their vulgar tongue? (b) unwilling they are, that their folly should be made manifest to all men and women; knowing that ignorance is the mother of their idolatrous devotions. But, to leave controversies, let me go on, and remember those women to whom I speak, that it is their duty to read, their happiness to

(a) B. Jewels reply to Hard. Art. 15. fol. 518.

Doctor Jackson on the  
Credo, lib. 2. sect. 1. ch.

1. pag. 238. ad. 405.

Alphonsus Cagren. de  
punit. heret. lib. 3. cap. 6.(b) Scripta divina han-  
tendorum fraudes con-  
vincit & farta derogat  
Tertul. lib. de Trin.

Basil. by enjoy, and should be their delight to peruse  
 his Nurse the holy Scriptures. Certain we are, that God  
~~Macrina.~~  
 Baf. cp. 74. commanded all Parents to teach their children  
 Polycarp. the words of his Law, and that accordingly So-  
 ad Philip-  
 venes. Ori-  
 gen. in Le-  
 wit. hom. 9.  
 August. in  
 Psal. 33.  
 Heron. in  
 Coloss. 3.  
 Chrysost. in Joh.  
 hom. 1. &  
 libisæpius  
 (a) M. Ma.  
 rulus  
 Spalatens.  
 de vitâ per  
 exempla  
 religiose  
 instit. l. 2.  
 cap. 5.  
 Trap. on  
 Luk. I 51.  
 And  
 doubtlesse  
 the elect  
 Lady, to  
 whom St.  
 John wrot  
 an Epistle,  
 might as  
 lawfully  
 read other  
 Scriptures as that Ep. (b) More of this nature in his Epistles to  
 Eustochium, Salvina, Celantia, and other Ladys.

to whom writes to hang these jewels always at her ears; and to *Faria*, a widow, he gives this advice, to reade chiefly the holy Scriptures; and after them, some learned writers, who were known to be sound in the faith. How much he abhorred the reading of idle Romances and obscene Poets is well known by other passages of his. He also relates at large the great love *Marcella*, a noble widow, had to the Scriptures, and of the Lady *Paula* (a) that she caused all her maid servants to learn frequently some portion of the *Psalms*, or other Scripture, by heart. (b) And another Ancient, giving some account of the knowledge, and piety then abounding in all Christians, sayes thus, *Ye may commonly see not only the teachers and rulers, but the meanest artificers, understand the principles of our Religion; and not only learned women, but also such women as live by their labour, Seamsters, maid servants &c. can reason of the Holy Trinity, and of the Creation of the world, and of the Nature of mankind, a great deal more skilfully then either Plato or Aristotle were ever able to do.* Thus be. (c) And we find that wicked apostate Julian objecting it against the Christians as an absurd thing among them, that they permitted their women and children to read the Scriptures. So that we see whose followers the Papists are, in finding the same fault with Protestants now. And were there no other argument, this might suffice with a religious mind,

(a) Hier.  
in Epitaph.  
*Paulæ.*

(b) Theodo-  
doret de  
naturâ ho-  
minis lib. 3.  
The like  
of Gorgenia  
sister of  
Nazianzen  
in his Orat.  
funebri in  
Gorgon.

Cyrill. con-  
tra Julian.  
lib. 6. & l. 7

mind, that, as *Tertullian* said, it could not  
 but be some great good which *Nero* condem-  
 ned; so it cannot but be a singular profit to all  
 men women, and children, to read, daily in the  
 Book of God, seeing *Julius*, and the Pope,  
 and all the instruments of Satan do so much  
 oppose it. Tis therefore to be bewailed, that  
 whereas in the times of former persecutions,  
 men would travel by night many miles to one  
 that could acquaint them with any part of  
 the Scripture in the English tongue, and  
 would give twenty shillings for a new-Testa-  
 ment, and a load of Hay for the Epistle of  
 St. James, (*the Word of the Lord being precious  
 in those dayes*) and yet now that Bibles are  
 cheap, and children are more generally taught  
 to read then in former ages, yet (I say) is a lamentation,  
 that Protestants had need be ex-  
 horted to read the Scriptures. Let me there-  
 fore conclude this point with my earnest in-  
 treaty to all readers, especially the afflicted,  
 & women that expect that dreadfull affliction  
 in child-bearing, to be more constant in read-  
 ing the Scriptures. The Scriptures being  
 as one sayes, a shop of medicines from whence  
 you may fetch a remedy for every malady and  
 danger. There you may see *I* shewed you  
 in the beginning of this book, what was the  
 practice of pious women when barren, what  
 when with child, what songs of thanksgiving  
 when delivered, what course they took for the  
 education of their children, &c. God also  
 hath

hath commanded you to search the Scriptures, and hath promised to give understanding to them that search for wisdom. If you understand not, pray to him and you shall understand. For the week he will teach his way, and satisfy the desire of every hungry soul. (a) It cannot be (say the Fathers) that any with earnest study and diligence; reading the Scriptures should be left destitute, and for although we lack the instruction of man, yet will God himself enter into our hearts, and cast a beam of light into our minds, & open things that are hidden & become our teacher of such things as we know not. He reveals that to women and children, which he hides from the wise and prudent. (b) And as reading the Scripture angers the Papists, so it angers the Devil, and rejoices the good Angels that attend us, yea tis a delight to Christ Himself. He looks down from heaven, to see if there be any that understand, and do good, and seeke after God; and he fayes to every member of the Church, I know thy works. Tis also comfortable to you selves, 'twill give you a sight offsin that you may be humbled, and of a Saviour by whom you may be reconciled to God. Twill direct you to every good work, 'twill season your mind with holy thoughts, furnish you for every condition, that so when your time of pain approaches, you may through patience and consolation of the Scripture have hope. Only remember to read the book of God with more reverence

John 5.39  
Prov. 2.4.  
5. &c.

(a) Aug. 9.  
Chrysost.  
contra an-  
natos, hom.  
3. and in  
Gen. hom.

35.  
Origen. in  
Exod. hom.  
9.

b Origen.  
in Num.  
hom. 27.  
& in Josh.  
hom. 30.

Psal. 14.2.  
Rev. 2.2.  
ch. 9. &c.

Rom. 15.  
4.

reverence then any other book. The jewes  
are curious, even to superstition, in handling  
the Sacred volumne, and keeping it cleare,

(e) Rosschis esteeming it a prodigious mischance if any of  
view of all them let his Bible fall to the ground. (a) And  
religions p. 482.

the *Moscovites* touch not this Book without so-  
lemne bowing even to the ground; these things  
are needless; but needfull it is that when we  
reade the Bible, we cōpose our hearts to an aw-  
full and attentive frame, remembraing that our

Prov. 2.3. live here, and by which we shall be judged  
4.5. hereafter; therefore lift up a prayer to him, as  
Psal. 119.

*David* often doth, for more quick understand-  
ing, and a more obedient heart; and do not  
huddle it over as a taske, and then lay it aside  
as a burthen, but chew upon it as thy food;  
yea charge it upon thy memory, and repeat

(b) Per-  
kins cas. of  
consc.lib. 2.  
c. 7. p. 71.

and (b) digest it often in thy meditation, that  
it may at last take hold of they heart and  
work in thee that which is well pleasing in the

sight of God. But of meditation I shall now  
speak in the next place.

## CHAP. V.

*Meditation the duty of women with child.*

IT cannot be, but women with child, when they begin to grow big and unwieldy, must be taken off from such manual imployments in which they were busied before, and must allow themselves some rest and retirement; therefore they should labour to make a good use of that time they have for prayer, and reading, and meditation, &c. Meditation being then most in season when other things are out of season; and hath herein the advantage of other duties, that it requires onely the inner to be employed therein. Idleness is alway dangerous, especially the idleness of our minds. If the Devil find the soul idle, hee'lle soon employ it. And therefore were it onely to prevent the incursion of sinfull and troublesome thoughts in our solitary seasons; and also, as one sayes (a) lest our spirits like milstones, wanting grist, grate themselves with vexation, feares, discontents, and waste themselves in a fruitlesse endless melancholy; I say, were it only to avoid this grand inconvenience, it were safest to have alway some choice head or other of pious, profitable matter, to busie our heads and hearts about. Nothing being more known among Christians then the precepts and pre-

(a) Bok  
ton. Gen.  
dir. p 71.

fidents

sidents of this kind in Scripture. Nothing more frequent in the writings and Sermons of Divines. Therefore I shall not meddle with the duty in general, but as it properly concerns women with child.

And for the better direction of those who are willing to make use of the help offered them, I shall present them with thirteen Meditations, which they may enlarge upon at their pleasure: not doubting but that divers of them are able to adde many others, as pertinent and profitable as these.

### MEDITATION I.

(4) The Rabbines have a notion, that there are four special Keyes, which the Lord reserveth in his own power. 1. *The Key of Rain.* 2. *The Key of Food.* 3. *The Key of the Grave.* 4. *The Key of the Heart.* To which may be added, *the Key of the Womb.* God hath opened my womb; oh that my heart were opened also. Nature hath locked it against God, and my customary sins have caused me, instead of opening when Christ knocketh, to adde more bolts to keep him out. But oh, that he who hath the key of David, who openeth, and none can shut, would break open, or lift up the everlasting gates of my soul, that the King of glory might come in, and sup with me. Then should I have more cause then yet I have, to rejoice in him, for opening my womb,

7. Plan-  
avit. Flo-  
rit. Rabbi-  
nicum.  
Deut. 27.  
12. Ps. 104.  
28. 1 Sam.  
2. 6. Acts  
16. 4.  
Gen. 30.  
22.  
Rev. 3. 7.

womb, and opening to me the treasures of raine  
and food; yea, then I should not care how  
soon a grave were opened for my body, if  
my heart were first opened by the grace of  
Christ.

### MEDITATION 2.

There is a different generation and conce-  
ption. The children of *Adam* are generally  
propagated by ordinary generation; but  
*Sampson*, *Jephthah*, &c. had wonders accom-  
panying their conception. The elect of God,  
who are in due time regenerate, are superna-  
turally born and conceived, *not of flesh and*  
*bloud, but of the Will of God*. Jesus Christ, as Joh. i. 19,  
to his humane nature, was not begotten, but  
miraculously conceived in the womb of the  
Virgin; as to his Divine nature, he was not  
conceived, but eternally begotten by the  
God and Father of all things. Though I am  
not like to be the Mother of a Prophet, or a  
Judge in *Israel*, though I have no miraculous  
or supernatural conception, but am with  
child, through Gods blessing, by my hus-  
band, in a state of matrimony, yet I hope, de-  
sire, and pray, that God would prepare some  
singular blessing for the fruit of my womb.  
Oh that it might, as was Saint *John*, be sancti-  
fied from the womb, and be filled with the holy  
Ghost, *that we may have joy and gladness, and*  
*many may rejoice at its birth*. Oh that it might  
please

Luke i.  
14, 15.

*please God so to bleis this unborn child, that it may grow and wax strong in the Spirit, and may become so eminent in holiness of life, that others may say, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee suck.*

## MEDITATION 3.

*And this is the sixth moneth with her who was called barren.* It is most probable, she was called, by way of reproach, the barren wife; and therefore not much set by, but rather vilified by the mothers in Israel, God hath restrained the wombs of some from bearing, but hath made mine fruitful. Whether the barrenesse of some good women, which I know, be to them a curse, I know not; but, oh my soul, how great a curse is spiritual barrenesse! and how cursed a creature do I then deserve to be! I am wise to doe evil (though none teach me; or tempt) but to doe good I have no knowledge. I have strong affections to love my friends, self, &c. to hate my enemies, and to be vexed at worldly crosses, and fear temporal dangers; but how weak is my love to God, hatred of sin, and fear of his all-seeing eye! I have done many things for my credit, profit, health, ease, &c. but how barren am I, and unfruitfull in the work of the Lord, and how little affected with the concernments of my soul! I have plenty of words for carnall company, and can, without study or

or help, vent my passions with much fluency and readiness, if my servants or inferiours displease me; but the Lord knows, and my soul is confounded to remember, that when fit occasion and opportunity have been offered, yea, a necessity laid upon me, of reproving or admonishing my relations or acquaintance, of inciting and quickning my family to true godliness, I have, many a time, said little or nothing, I have quenched the fire of zeal that burned within me; I have by my needless silence seemed to own what my soul abhors; yea, when I have purposed and resolved to speak with serious earnestness in Gods behalfe, my heart hath been barren of fit matter, my tongue hath wanted words, and I have stood mute and silent, as if possessed with a dumb devil. Now, whence is this? If I be married to Christ, and implanted into him, why is it Mic. 2.7. thus? surely I am not straitned in him, but in my self. Wherefore, oh my soul, go to him who onely worketh both to will and to doe of his own good pleasure. And never cease importuning him, till he quicken me by his Spirit, and cause me know and enjoy the vertues and powers of my Saviour. Then shall I bring forth my fruits unto holiness, and my end shall be everlasting life. Rom. 6.23

#### MEDITATION 4.

I Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and Job 10.10  
svii curdled

Miseres  
egi; etiam  
under asti-  
uantem  
uam fir-  
trivola a.  
uantium  
uperbissi.  
toris origo.  
Plin. nat.  
hist. l. 7.c.  
7.

clarded me like cheese ? The child in my womb  
is made of the like substance as I was. And  
though I now have growth, strength, beauty,  
or comeliness, yet I was once imperfect  
enough, when I was newly begotten of man,  
and conceived in the womans womb. Alas,  
how vile are those materials of which my bo-  
dy was made ? Scripture draws a veyl of mo-  
dest and metaphorical expressions over this  
unsightly act of generation. And when I  
consider, oh my soul, the poor original of my  
body, *Alas, what preheminence have I herein  
above a beast ?* what cause to abhorre all  
thoughts of pride, and to walk humbly all my  
dayes ? If the Peacock let fall his plumes,  
when he beholds his black feet, have not I  
cause to be cast down with a less esteem of my  
self, when I consider my *vile body* ? In noth-  
ing more vile, then in its first coagulation of  
ignoble matter.

### MEDITATION 5.

Job 10.11

*Thou hast cloathed me with skin and flesh;  
thou hast fenced me with bones and sinews.  
Though, in regard of the matter and manner  
of my generation, my body is no better then  
a bag of flegm, a lump of blood, a moistened  
clod of earth; yet when I raise my mind to  
the work of my Creator, who fashioned me  
round about, covered me in my mothers womb,  
and formed me in the lowest parts of the earth, I  
have*

have then no cause to say to my Father, what hast thou begotten, or to my Creator, why hast thou made me thus. If I may, in every creature, see some prints and footsteps of the wisdome, power, and goodness of God, in their formation, production, and conservation of their kind, in a continual succession for the use of man; how much more cause have I to search out this work of God; in which there is as much of excellency, curiosity, and exactnesse of skill, as in all the creation besides. Much is said by Philosophers, Physicians, Anatomists, &c. concerning this great secret of Nature, the Child in the Womb. They speak, with much probability and rational conjecture, of the manner and matter of generation & conceptions, of the very day when the womb, by its natural heat, begins to operate towards it, & when it receives its first change into a fleshy substance; what day the brain, heart and liver, begin to be distinguished, and when it receives a humane shape in other parts, though the whole be no bigger then a small flie. Also how it is nourished, and in what place and posture it lies, if male, and in what, if female. What day it receives, by the gift of God, a living soul, and when it begins to stir and calcitrare in the womb, &c. But the further I dive and search into this matter, the more I am at a loss; still new questions do arise, which I cannot resolve. Even this knowledge is too wonderfull for me. Solomon hath put a question,

on, which I think himself could hardly answer; Knowest thou how the bones do grow in  
 Eccles. 11.5 the womb of her that is with child? Therefore,  
 oh my soul, let me sing that song of David,  
 and, if possible, with Davids heart. I will  
 Psal. 139. praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully  
 14, 15, 16, made, marvellous are thy works, and that my  
 17. soul knoweth right well. My substance was  
 not hid from thee, when I was made in secret,  
 and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the  
 earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet  
 being imperfect, and in thy book all my mem-  
 bers were written, which in continuance were fa-  
 shioned, when as yet there were none of them:  
 How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O  
 God, how great is the summe of them? But I  
 must not, I cannot, here leave off this delight-  
 ful Meditation, but must again praise the  
 Lord, for that he hath not executed the curse  
 of Adam, to the uttermost, upon us. Though  
 sin hath robbed us of many most desirable  
 perfections, yet there is that left, with which,  
 and for which we may glorifie God. If we  
 survey the frame and building of this earthly  
 tabernacle, we shall find that rare fitness of  
 every part, and that symmetry of the whole,  
 that we cannot but say, its builder and maker  
 is God. What shall I say of the several mem-  
 bers and particles of our bodies, of the situ-  
 ation of the more noble parts, and subordinati-  
 on of the rest, of the influences of the higher  
 parts on those that are less noble, of the ma-

ny channels of conveyance, whereby the inner parts transmit bloud, strength and spirits, to the exteriour and most remote. What of the beauty, strength, tenderness, majesty, and singular faculties of some parts; of the contiguities and artificial connexion of all parts; what of the sagacity of the five senses, the mixture of the four elements, the correspondence our bodies have with all creatures, the resemblance of the three regions, yea, of the three heavens, &c. For which causes, Man is called a little world, the measure of all things, the pattern of the Universe, the miracle of miracles, &c. Yea, mans body is, yet, in regard of its majesty, strength beauty, and noble faculties of its several parts, in some measure, (a) 2 Chr. after the image of God, (a) And God himself 16. 9. is pleased to represent his perfections and operations by several parts of the body of man. If therefore, the serious prying into any one part take up the time and study of the learned, Dan. 9.18. Psal. 34.16. Job. 40.9. Psal. 74.3. Isa. 49.16. insomuch that Galen was turned from Atheism &c.

in studying the secrets of mans body, and presently praised and acknowledged our Crea-  
tour; then, oh my soul, let that which made him a Christian, make me a more thankful Christian; that I may more zealously glori-  
fie God with my body, and may hereafter have all its primitive perfections restored at the Resurrection, when God shall raise it in honour and incorruption, and make it like the glorious body of Jesus Christ.

## MEDITATION 6.

Anatomists themselves are utterly to seek, what reason to give for the opening and shutting of the womb. But though I know not the natural causes hereof, yet I find by the effects, that the child is quick within me. And oh that I could say with like certainty, that though I *know not the way of the Spirit*, or how grace comes in, and sin goes out, how Christ enters, and Satan is dispossessed; yet I feel by the effects, that whereas *I did once conceive and bring forth sin*, yet now grace conceives holy motions, and brings forth religious actions; that whereas my heart was *a cage of unclean spirits*, and barren of goodness, yet now *Christ is formed within me*; now I feel, by happy effects, that grace is quick within me, and quickens me to every

*Psal. 103. i. good work; Wherefore blesse the Lord, oh my soul; and all that is within me blesse his holy name.*  
*Luk. i. 43. 49. For he that is mighty, hath done to me great things, and holy is his name. And whence is this to me, that the grace of Christ should come to me?*

## MEDITATION 7.

*Gen. 25. 22, 23. Rebecca conceived, and the children struggled within her, and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? that is, if I am heard of God in my request,*

quest, and am with child by his blessing; whence is this strugling, this painful conflict, and strange unquietness of the fruit of my womb? *And she went to enquire of the Lord, and the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, &c.* So, when I look into my self, and observe the commotions that are in the womb of my heart, I conclude, Surely there are two nations within me, the flesh, with all its motions, *lusting against the spirit and its grace;* and the Spirit with its gracious influences, alway striving against the sinfulness of my carnal part. *Gal. 5.17.*

Now blessed be God, that seeing sin will yet keep possession, that it hath no quiet abode within me, but meets with reluctancy and opposition from my spirituall part. But *oh wretched creature that I am,* how often is evill present and prevalent with me, how many are those pangs of sorrow, those sighs and grones that my mischievous and restleis corruptions cause within me?

But if it be so, that the power of the most High hath overshadowed me, and true grace be implanted in my soule, then I shall seek to the Lord, that he would cause the better part in me to be the more prevailing part; that he would water and give increase to these tender beginnings, and give me at last a safe and happy deliverance from *this body of death.*

## MEDITATION 8.

**Exod. 21.** If men strive and hurt a woman with child,  
**22, 23.** so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no  
 mischief follow, he shall be surely punished, &c.  
 Women with child are liable to many dan-  
 gers. A fall, a bruise, an accidentall stroke, a  
 fright, a strain, the taking somewhat that  
 proves expulsive, or the disappointment of  
 somewhat they longed for; these and such  
 other contingencies are noxious to them, and  
 often-times cause abortion, or the mischance  
 of her fruit departing from her. Such was the  
**Rev. 12.2,** with many Converts, the great red Dragon  
**3.** watched the destruction of her, and of her  
 fruit.

**Isa. 32. 9,** And thus is with every repenting soul.  
**10, 11.** What security soever there be among those  
 careless women that are at ease; how little in-  
 ward care or sorrow they feel, while they  
 forget God; how unacquainted soever with  
 the hurt and smart of sin, or Satans striving  
 with them, before they are acquainted with  
 God: yet, no sooner do they espouse them-  
 selves to Christ, and conceive purposes of holy  
 living, and begin to be fruitful in any grace, but  
 they shall have many adversaries in the world,  
 and especially the god of this world, striving  
 against them; to affright them, to tempt them to  
 receive such principles, company, suggestions,

as may quench their graces; or to deprive them of that Spiritual food they long for, or to intice them to straine their consciences, or some way or other to cause them to fall, that they may be wounded, bruised &c. and the fruit of grace depart from them. But oh my soul, hath God such care of the unborn infant as to provide a speciall law in its behalfe; and will he not much more take care of that grace which he hath begotten in my Soul? Oh my God, keep me that the Evill One touch me not.

## MEDITATION 9.

*In sorrow shalt thou bring forth Children.* Gen. 3:16  
 As the first general curse, In aying thou shalst  
 dy, brought not onely the pains of death, but  
 intended also all the miseries of our life; so this  
 particular curse upon women, brings not on-  
 ly pain in travell, but comprehends all the in-  
 firmitieis of Child-bearing. I find that the child  
 in my womb brings many weaknesses and  
 aches upon me; but oh how sad and deplora-  
 ble are those deeper sicknesses and maladies,  
 which I have brought upon it? Its body par-  
 taking of my substance, partakes unavoidably  
 of my natural pollution. Its Soul, though it  
 come immediately from the Father of Spirits,  
 yet (I know not how) is upon its infusion into  
 this tender infant, subjected to the common  
 misery of the Children of Adam; who having  
 lost the image and likenesse of God, sinne and

corruption must needs follow. I am an  
 Psal. 58.3. *uncleane vessel,* and how can any clean thing  
 Ia. 48.8. come out of me? Oh my soul, what need have  
 I to be sanctified throughout both in Body, and  
 Soul, and Spirit. And, Oh my God, repair by  
 thy grace, what sin hath made so defective in  
 me and mine.

### MEDITATION 10.

Our blessed Saviour and Great Prophet Je-  
 sus Christ, foretelling the miseries that should  
 shortly come on *Jerusalem*, sayes, *We*  
 Mat. 24.19. *unto them that are with Child,* and to them that  
 Lu. 23.29. *give suck in those days.* And in another Evan-  
 gelist: *Bebold the dayes are coming in the which*  
*they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the*  
*wombe that never bane, and the paps that never*  
*gave suck.* And indeed of all persons, none  
 more miserable in the time of War than wo-  
 men with child, or women that give suck; be-  
 cause their care is double, and their persons  
 uncapable of flying and shifting for their  
 lives, as those who are single may and do. And  
 of all murthers none more horrible in all its  
 2 Kin. 8.12. circumstances, *then to rip up women with child.*  
 Lam. 5.11. Wherefore, oh my soul, let me be thankfull  
 to my God, that there is *peace in our borders,*  
 and any quietness and safety in my habitation,  
 and that I am free from those terrors and af-  
 frights, with which many others in a time of  
 common calamity are undone. Oh how many

Wo-

Women, with their unborn infants, have been butchered in many places in ages past, and martyred by blood-thirsty Papists in these latter ages, of which histories are too plentiful! And if there be now any in my condition, in any place, especially among Christians, that is exposed daily to the rage of a devouring Sword; the Lord be pleased either to restrain the *Enemy and the Avenger*, or to avenge the cause of the murthered, that ( according to thy own Law ) they may not go unpunished but may give life for life. Yea, Lord bear the *crie of the oppressed and give their adversaries blood to drink; for they are worthy.*

Psal. 8. 2.  
Rev. 6. 10.

### M E D I T A T I O N II.

*My little children, of whom I travel in birth again till Christ be formed whithin you. Where any place is blest with a painfull Minister and Pastour after Gods own heart, they have in them much of the Apostle's temper. For, when I consider their painfull studies, their sighes and teares, their spending their spirits in ardent Prayers, and laborious Preaching; their compassionate exhortations, & passionate supplications, and their giving themselves wholly to these things; I conclude, that surely they have many agonies and conflicts in their hearts for us. Wherfore, Oh my soul, while I carefully expect the hour of my own travell, how much am I to blame, that I so little, so seldom,*

Gal. 4. 19.

1 Tim. 4.

15.

Coloss. 2. 1.

or never, consider the travell of my Ministers  
 soal? often have I been pricked in conscience  
 Ecc. 12.11 by his goad and nails, often wounded by the  
 sword of the Spirit, bruised and smitten down  
 by the hammer of the word; and surely his stim-  
 ulating reproofs, his keen admonitions,  
 and knocking terrors, proceeded from his  
 longing desire of my conversion. But when  
 he hath, after long striving, been in hopes of  
 my returne, how have I, by relapses, and fresh  
 miscarriages, vexed his righteous soul, and  
 quencht his new conceived hopes of me? yea  
 like those inconstant Galatians, I have caused  
 him again and again to travell with me in  
 birth. How just were it with God to plague  
 me with a tedious, painfull, and fruitlesse tra-  
 vell? and to make me read my sin, and feel  
 its bitternesse, in so sueable a punishment?  
 But, Oh my God, remit the evills I have com-  
 mitted, work in me what thou hast required,  
 and compleat in me what thy grace hath be-  
 gun. Let not the guide of my soul labour in  
 vain, but let him see of the travell of his soul;  
 and let me be among those children, of whom  
 my pious teacher shall hereafter say, *Lord here  
 am I, and the children which thou hast given  
 me!* Then also shall I with more confidence  
 expect to have benefit by his prayers for me,  
 when my body is in travell, if God shall thus  
 blesse and answer him, in his prayers and tra-  
 vell for the new birth of my soul.

## MEDITATION 12.

I find it frequent in Scripture, that the most dreadful judgements on the wicked are thus express'd, that *Anguish shall take hold of them as of a woman in travel*, and that sudden destruction shall come upon them as upon a man in travel, and they shall not escape. Wherefore, oh my soul, as Abraham when he had promise of a child, did presently intercede (as far as he durst) in behalf of wicked Sodom; so let me ever remember, to pray for the worst of men, though perhaps they scorn and despise me and my Prayers. Oh my God, deal not with them after their sins; but cause the wickednesse of the wicked to come to an end, that the wicked themselves may not come to a sad end. So persecute them with thy tempest & make them afraid with thy storms that they may seeke thy face Oh Lord. And in whatever place or nation thy judgments shall enter, yet if there be but a few righteous persons among them, spare them from totall destruction, and let not thy wrath come upon them to the uttermost.

## MEDITATION 13.

I find also that the sorrows of the people of God, when God seemes to forsake them, the calamities of the church when God is pleased to correct them, and the miserable disappointment

John. 16

21.22.

Jer. 6. 24.

c. 22. 23.

c. 30. 6.

Na. 26. 17.

18. c. 37. 3.

ment of a Church hoping for reformation, and endeavouring in vain for a deliverance from idolatry and oppression, are also expressed by the pain and misery of women in travell. Now, Oh my soul, how can I but observe two things from hence?

The one is, that 'tis surely the will of God, that I should not confine my care to the concernments of my private condition, but should labour for a publick Spirit; such as was in that good woman, the wife of Phineas, who was with child and near to be delivered, and when she heard the tidings that the Ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, she bowed her selfe and travelled; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that stood by her said, fear not, for thou hast born a son, but she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, the glory is departed from Israel, because the Ark of God was taken, and because of her father in law and her husband. And she said, the glory is departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken. Blessed woman, worthy of everlasting fame and imitation! She took no comfort in her deliverance though she had a son, while the Church of God was not delivered. Oh that the same mind might be in me, that I might learn also to be more affected with the affairs of the Church! That, if women may not be common actors of publick affairs, yet we may be specially

full mourners for publick miseries. Alas, what is my danger to the universall danger, my travell to the travell of the Church? what comfort to me to have many children, except I might see the good of Gods chosen? what content have I in being delivered from my pains, unlesse God deliver Israel from all its troubles? Psal. 106. 5. Psal. 37. what delight had Abraham in all his mercies, 40. while he went childlesse; or I in all my children if the children of God be comfortlesse? Oh my God, blesse me out of Zion, and thus let me be blessed as those are that feare the Lord; let me not onely be a fruitfull vine, but let me see the good of Jerusalem all my dayes; Let me not only see my choldren's children, but peace upon Israel. Psal. 128: 3, 4, 5, 6.

But from the manner of holy Writ to compare almost all miseries, whether inward or outward, whether of good men, or of bad, to the pains of women in travell, as the fitteste embleme of extreme conflicts and agonies, I must needs conclude, that there is no sorrow like unto that sorrow, and no evill like that sin that caused it; no danger like that danger, and therefore no Saviour like him who can deliver from it. Wherefore, while my life hangs in suspense, my soul is distracted between fear and hope, my mind is appall'd, my heart melts, and is even faint, when I consider that hour of torment approaching. Let me yet further inquire, Oh my soul, what duties are yet behind, in order to making my peace with God, and let nothing hinder or divert

divert my present religious and heavenly im-  
ployment, till I have brought my mind into  
some settled posture, ready to abide whatever  
shall happen.

So much for the duty of Meditation; now  
to the rest.

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## CHAP. VI.

### *Resignation to the will of God, the duty of Women with child.*

**T**O submit and resign our wills to the will  
of God in all things, is a most desirable  
and comfortable temper in any man or wo-  
man. Tis indeed the sum of most duties, and a  
compendium of many virtues. He that can  
*thus receive the Kingdome of God as a little  
child*, with Selfe denial and humble depen-

Mark. 10.

15. dance on our Father in heaven, he shall in  
time, by thus subjecting himself to the Divine  
will in doing or suffering, grow very like the  
Angels and Saints in heaven, and shall him-  
self enjoy that tranquillity and undisturbed  
serenity, as will be a kind of heaven upon  
earth. The truth whereof will especially ap-  
pear in this particular case of suffering any  
dangerous and painfull afflictions. There was  
nothing more commendable in old Eli, than  
that pious sentence of his when he heard of  
the ruine of his house, *It is the Lord, let him do  
what*

1 Sam. 3.  
18.

what seemeth him good. There was never more grace expressed in fewer words, than in those of our Saviour's, *not my will but thine be done.* Considering, that his pangs, agonies, and torments, were a thousand times greater, than the pains of a woman in travell, yea equall (in substance) to the pains of hell. Wherefore be not sollicitous overmuch for your bodily life, or the life of your child; much lesse should you be too eager in desiring one of such a sex: as some will wish for a Boy, others for a Girle; and that with strange discontent at the very thoughts of being disappointed. But the example of *Rachel* may be a warning to you all. She made account to die with melancholy and sorrow, if she had not children; and she had her desire but it cost her, her life: As you may do well to reade in the story it selfe. So what she longed for, she perished by. Tis reported of *Agrippina*, Nero's Mother, that she prayed, her son might be Emperour. The oracle told her, that if he came to be Emperour, he would kill his Mother; she replied desperately, let him kill me, so I may but see him Emperour first. And the event prooved accordingly, for he caused her to be ript up, that he might see the inside of that womb wherein he first lay. I have read also of a woman that took on excessively, for her child that was like to die; and the Minister telling her that she did very unwiseley, for perhaps the child, if it lived, might prove so great  
*Occidat modo impetum peret. succidat.*

Luke 22.

41.

Mat. 26.42

great a crosse to her, that she might have  
 cause once to wish, that he had now died.  
 She madly answered, that so her child might  
 live, she did not care though he should here-  
 after come to Hanging. Accordingly he did  
 live, and was in time for robbery or murther  
 hanged indeed. This folly would have seem'd  
 ridiculous to some heathens, who knew not  
 the will and wisedom of God, so clearly as we  
 may. Plutarch relates of Cleobis and Biton,  
 that,in the absence of the horses, they drew  
 their Mother's Chariot to the temple them-  
 selves; for which obedient Act of theirs,  
 she prayed,that they might be rewarded with  
 the greatest blessings that could possibly hap-  
 pen from God to Man: but so it happened  
 that they were both found dead in their beds  
 next morning. News being brought to their  
 Mother of this supposed misfortune, she re-  
 plied, I will never account my selfe unfortu-  
 nate, in being mother to such sons whom God  
 hath invested with immortality for their pious  
 and obedient actions. If a pagan woman had  
 so good an esteem of the providence of an  
 unkown God, how inexcusable are you, if by a  
 heart of unbelief or self-love, you depart from  
 him in your faith, or prescribe to him in your  
 prayers? How dishonourable to his wisedom,  
 and dangerous to your selves, is passionate im-  
 portunity for any temporall blessing? Tis  
 lawfull, I confesse, to pray for life, and safe de-  
 liverance ( as for daily bread;) for David,  
 Hezekiah

Hesekiah, yea Christ himself did thus position the Author of life; It being naturall to every living creature to desire the continuation of its own Being. But we must moderate our desires herein, with expresse reference to Gods good Will; Yea, with that holy indifference, as to be pleased without that gift which it shall not please God to bestow.

English  
Annot. on  
Gen. 35. 18

(a) Seeing (as one sayes) there is a necessity of yielding to Gods Will because it cannot be resisted, and there is equity in so doing, because it cannot be better'd. Wherefore when blind nature

(a) Doct.  
Gorge on  
the L rds  
prayer. p.  
94.

which cannot see beyond mortality (at least, not see far into immortality) shall fill you with earnest desires of longer life; yet let the reverence you owe to the gracious Providence and infallible Word of God (of which I shall say more in the following Chapters) cause you to yeild to his blessed Will. Cast up all events, consider what may happen, and resolve, as David did, *If I shall finde favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and shew me* 2 Sam : 5. *both the ark and his habitation: but if he thus* 25, 26. *say, Behold I have no delight in thee, behold here am I let him do to me what seemeth good unto him.* Say with them in the Acts, *the will of the Lord be done.* Say with that good woman (I have somewhere read of) who being asked in her sicknesse, whether, if God should referre it to her to live or dye, which she would chuse, *I would choose neither bnt ee'n referre it to him again.* If God call for the life

Acts 21. 14

life of your child, yield it up as quietly as Abraham did Isaac. If he shall call for the life both of you and your child, let your heart be ready to answer, *Lord, here am I, and the child which thou hast given me.*

## C H A P. VII.

## Dedication of the child to God, the duty of women with child.

**V**HEN, I say, it is your duty to dedicate your child to God before it is born, I do not mean a dedication to some office in the house of God, as Hannah did by Samuel, (for I suppose she did it by some propheeticall instinct equivalent to a Revelation.) But yet this I must needs say, in short, That it were, in my judgement, a commendable purpose in any parents, poor or rich, that, if their child prove hopefull and ingenious, he shall be wholly set apart for the service of God in his Church. It being so known a practice among Heathens, Jewes, and ancient Christians, if they had any thing of singular worth, to dedicate it to God. And our Gentry and Nobility are herein guilty of a most irreligious and ignoble practice; I mean, to count their son and heir, or any of their children, that are well shaped, and towardly, above the office of the Ministry; as if it would

would be a perpetual dishonour to their family, to set him a-part for God: But, if there be any of their children mis-shapen, make him a Scholar; and, if he be a Dunce, use their interest to get him some preferment, that requires no employment. Surely, the first author of the Priesthood, God himself, appointed it to the first-born, as his peculiar honour above the rest of his brethren; and, for special provocations against God, they lost it, and it was conferred, by divine favour, on Levi. And how plentifull are Histories of the ancient practices of many Nations, especially the Romans, in appropriating the office of chief Priest to their Kings and Emperours, as an honour not befitting any meaner person. Yea, among Christians, the Prince of Anhalt, and other persons of honour, have ambitiously accepted, and happily performed, the Ministerial Office. And no doubt, but one reason why the Ministry is of no higher esteem, is, because divers selfish needy persons seek the Priesthood merely for maintenance; and so are tempted, by their indigency, to unsuitable courses, and dishonorable shifts; and are uncapable of being so beneficent as they would, or should be; and also are the less regarded, because extracted from the meanest of the people. And, no doubt, this is the reason, why the Nobility and Gentry are more scared then loved, more envied then esteemed, because they mind their own honour, but not at all the honour of God; they love their ease, their pomp, their lusts, and excess of riot; but

as for the tranquillity or utility of the Church, they are meer Gallio's. Just it is with God, that they should be of mean parts, and illiterate Ignoramus (as many of them are) seeing if they had either parts or learning they would scorn to employ them for the service of God in his Church. Therefore, till I can bear or imagine any reason to the contrary, I shall here propose it as a thing commendable in any person of quality, be they never so great, to entertain such thoughts in their minds, of devoting their child to God, as did Hannah. And I doubt not, but if any of them, who are less mancipated to the common follies, would cease a while to idolize themselves, and suffer reason and conscience to speak, they would consider better of it. But this I speak not by commandement. And therefore it is not a Precept, but a counsel.

Much less should any be so far besotted with Popish persuasions, or Jesuitical delusions, as to think a child not dedicated to the Lord, unless it be dedicated to a Monastick life.

**Judg. 13.5** Though Sampson, while yet in the womb, was appointed to be a Nazarite, yet not by his parents choice, but by the command of the Angel. Therefore let them onely take such a course, as have the like warrant.

Well then, by dedicating it to God, I mean, that which is the indispensable duty of all Christian parents, viz. partly in purposing, while the child is yet in the womb, that if it safely enter into the land of the living, and come

to years of maturity, they will use all possible endeavors that it may be the Lords, by bringing it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; partly by serious prayers to God in its behalf, that it may be separated to him from the womb. Thus, I say, should every mother beg of God, that, as it is mine by nature, so it may be thine by grace; that as I have received from thee, so thou wouldest be pleased to accept my dedication of it to thee again. Some women have such prayers and purposes, when their travel fills them with pain; and threatens them with danger; but, if once delivered, they mind them no more. Wherefore, let your duty herein take an earlier date, that it may make better impression in your heart. And assure your self, if you thus purpose and desire that your child may be set apart for God, and become holy to the Lord, it shall be with you as with *David*; he dedicated much for the Temple, and purposed to build an house <sup>2 Sam 7:12,13,14,</sup> for God; though he lived not to accomplish <sup>15.</sup> his desire, yet he lived in his son, and was blessed with a *Solomon*, who did afterwards happily accomplish it: so, I say, Whether you live or not, yet because it is in your heart, as soon as ever the child was in your womb, to devote it to the Lord; this is, doubtless, <sup>thank-</sup>worthy with him: you shall be blessed in your posterity, and your prayers shall return into <sup>Ps. 35.13.</sup> your own bosom. For either your child shall live long in the land, and enjoy the fruit of

your early prayers, or enter with you into Heaven, where you shall enjoy him in glory for ever, having your joy herewith augmented, that God took him so soon.

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## C H A P. VIII.

*Care of her own health, the duty of a woman with child.*

**T**Hough care of the body may seem to be a matter of so small moment, as scarce to deserve a chapter by it self ; yet the truth is, it is a duty of so great concernment, that it must not be excluded, but distinctly considered by child-bearing women. Certain we are, that life and health must be reckoned among those talents which God doth intrust them with. Because the health of the body contributes much to perfect all operations of the mind : but women with child have a far greater reason to be mindful of their health, *viz.* not onely for their own sakes, but the good of the infant that is yet unborn. If therefore some grave Authors have thought it necessary, that the Father himself should observe divers rules of temperance, both in body and mind, if he expect towardly and comely children; How much more requisite is it, that the mother, who contributes far more

*Charon of  
Wisdom.*

*Magirus  
Phys:*

to

to the body and disposition of the child, then the Father (because the child, for many months, receives such nourishment as the womb, where it lies, affords; I say, how much more doth it concern her) to use all possible caution and discretion, to keep her self in a healthy and well-ordered plight, that she may afford the better nutriment to the fruit of her womb.

I question not, but their care herein is as effectual to the strength of their child, as the warmth of the Sun and enriching the soil is to my fruit. And as fruit that ripens kindly is gathered the easier, and comes off without tearing the branch on which it grows; so the child, the more strength it receives from the mother, as the root, and the more vigorous it grows by all additional helps, the easier and speedier will its passage into the world be.

This is one reason (say Expositors) if not the chief reason, why the Angel layes so strict a charge upon the wife of *Manoah*, when she was with child with *Sampson*, to abstain from wine and strong drink, because he was to be a Nazarite, and therefore must not have his temper and constitution infected with a natural liking to that, which he was prohibited the use of. By which you may perceive, what influence the meat, drink, desires, and delights of the mother, have upon the future disposition of the child. Wherefore learn it as a special duty to forbear

Dr. Gouge  
of Domest.  
Duties, p.  
516.

all excess in meats and drinks, use no violent recreations, take no needless journeys, incumber not your body with much labour, nor your mind with much anxious care, sorrow and trouble. Give not way to immoderate passion, the vehemency whereof may much distemper and endanger you in that condition. For if by these or any other follies, there happen a mischance, or the death of both the mother and the child unborn (as too often it hath happened) surely the bloud of the child shall be required at their hands, & their own bloud also shall be upon their own heads. Now judge, how much guilt and danger lies upon careless & wanton women (who will not observe that moderation and prudential care their condition calls for; I say, how much sin and misery lies upon them) if they perish by their own negligence and heedless irregularity. Of all sins, none more crying then Murther ; of all murthers, none more desperate then Self-murther; and of all self-murthers, . none more detestable then to murther her self and child at once : & this, I say, they are inex culpably guilty of, who by any of the courses above-mentioned, or any other course, do hasten their own death, and render the birth of their child difficult or impossible.

Hof. 4. 2.

Psal. 9. 12.

Jer. 16. 15

Ps. 51. 14.

## CHAP. IX.

*Preparation for death, the duty of those women  
with child, who never yet repented.*

That this must not be delayed, I have already shewed in the Epistle to the Reader, I shall now shew you how it must be performed (not to insist largely upon this common Theme, which every Funeral Sermon and devotional Treatise do present us with) considering very briefly the heads of such principal duties as may not safely be omitted by them that would be at any certainty concerning their future estate. If you be unconverted, and have lived in pleasure, been ignorant, careless and impenitent, then consider, that it is now high time to awake out of sleep, Rom. 13.11 and to number your dayes, and consider your latter end. You have no peculiar priviledge, that can exempt you from the lot of many others. Be you never so great and rich, strong and healthy, have you been the mother of never so many children, have you abundance of all things for your convenientie, together with the most skilful and famous Midwife; yet neither these, nor any other helps, can deliver you from going down to the

pit. Therefore seeing it must needs be proper to expect death, let me ask you, how are you provided for immortality? What earnest have you of any inheritance in Heaven?

If you hope that God will pardon you, and accept you; yet, what reason can you render

**i Pet. 3.15**

of the hope that is in you? if, because he is merciful, then how have you applied your self to him for mercy? have you constantly

**i Pet. 4.18** sought him, diligently pleased him, &c? For if

the righteous shall scarcely be saved, where shall

**Luk. 13.24** the ungodly appear? If many who strive to enter, shall not be able, how impossible then,

must salvation needs be to the negligent?

In a word, if Pharisees, Hypocrites, Votaries, and those that have done many good and mighty works shall be shut out; how much

more shall they be excluded, that never had either the form or power of godliness, that

lived in gross ignorance and prophaneness,

**Tim. 5.24** so that their sins are open before hand.

Well, you will say, What shall we do to be saved, and to inherit eternal life?

Answer; You should first look over the ten Commandments, and consider what sins

are there forbidden, and what duties are there required.

**Ro. 3.20.** For by the law comes the knowledge of

**i Joh:3.4.** sin. If you have some brief expositor by you, it

will much help. I knew one, that when he was

at the University, and had serious thoughts of his

ways, took M. Bifield his 6. Treatises (a little book

of small price, but of excellent use) wherein

there

there is such an enumeration of sins against the several commandments, as descends to all particulars, fit to be expressed in print, and having in several sheets of paper transcribed it, and all along inserted what particular sins he could remember. (And he found that it brought many sins to his remembrance, which otherwise he had all night forgotten;) set apart a day of fasting in secret on purpose, and there spread them before the Lord with mourning and with supplication, and found very much comfort therein. Now, though I prescribe not this particular course to every one; yet, I say, a serious comparing our lives with the rule of holiness, is the one thing necessary to lay a right foundation of repentance. Well, when you thus have spent some good time in searching and trying your ways, and have discovered greater and greater abominations in your heart and life; Then spend also some thoughts about the unreasonableness, unprofitableness, unthankfulness and iniquity of every sin. Consider, what wrong sin does to the honour of Gods Attributes, and of his Law. His Holiness requires nothing but what is good, his Wisdome what is fit, and his Mercy what is comely and beneficial for us. Shall we break such a Law, wherein Holiness, Wisdome, and Mercy appears? If any thing be difficult, he offers the help of his Grace, to all that bewail their weakness. And whatever his Law be, yet surely he is our Creator; and therefore, by all bonds of

Reason

2 Cor. 12.  
5,6.

Reason and Nature, we owe obedience to him, whose we are. Again, consider the injury done to Christ, by piercing him with our Sins, by despising his Bloud (that onely and costly remedy) and dishonouring his Name, as if he were not sufficient to save, or as if his Grace gave liberty to Sinne. Also consider the perjury every sinner is guilty of, in violating our Baptismal engagement, and making slight account of all other renewed stipulations we have made to God since. What shall I say of the shame and mischief sin brings upon us in this life? It deprives of Gods Image, Favour, and gracious Presence, robs us of that primitive innocency & righteousness, with which the humane Nature was at first dignified above all sublunary creatures, and degrades us to a condition (in many respects) *worse than that of the beasts that perish*, yea, it makes us children of the Devil, and children of wrath: it fills the creature with vanity, under which it groans and travails in pain; it fills our life with crosses, our family with troubles, our bodies with diseases, our consciences with disquiet. Sin makes travel painful, death dreadful, and hell intolerable; so that it is a boundless and endless evil. And should not such considerations as these awaken you? May it not trouble you to consider with your self thus, If I die with all this load of sin upon me, it will surely sink me deep enough into the burning lake? And alas, if I live till the full time

Psal. 49.  
12, 20.  
Eccles. 3.  
18.

time of my travel come (which is very uncertain) yet how little a while is it before that fatal hour may sever my soul from my body; *My soul*, which is invisible, and therefore lessle minded, while my vile body hath been pampered, and delicately kept; and then I must appear before an impartial Judge, whose eyes are as flames of fire; and *how shall I shall escape or endure his sentence of condemnation, who have neglected so great salvation?* Oh Eternity, that amazing word, that astonishing thing! who can number the millions of years contained in Eternity? Who can spie either bank or bottom in the Ocean of eternity? Well, if I were not certain, but had onely a suspicion that my soul shall have eternal recompences, according to its works, yet why should I adventure upon sin? If there were neither Hell nor Heaven, yet sin is batefull and filthy in it self, and holiness and righteousness is most eligible and amiable for it self. So that, were I never so much an infidel, yet reason will tell me, that onely piety can beget in my minde true tranquillity. But surely, my Creator is true, and therefore will, in another world, bring every work into judgement, and by rewards and punishments, vindicate, for ever, that honour of his holiness, which is so little regarded upon earth.

Having, with such things as these, brought your mind to consider of the nature and danger of your sins, endeavour, in the next place,

Heb.2.3.

Eccles.12.

14.

to

to set your self to weeping, supplication, and fasting ; (but still as your weakness will bear, for God will have mercy, and not sacrifice, and therefore an unseasonable or intolerable measure of religious melancholly, which may endanger yuor body, is from the devil, that murtherer) acknowledge your offences, and seek the face of God. And be not slight or weary in this work, but the more your heart draws back, and the sooner it would give over, as if you had now done enough, the more suspect your self, and stir up your self to call upon God. Do not this work by halves, but bring it to some good issue, and while your heart is in any serious temper, and conscience begins to accuse, listen to it, lest God give you over to final impenitency and unbelief, and then seven worse devils will enter, and you will soon be ripe for Hell. Wherefore I tell you again, you must, upon the sight of your sins, bend your knees to the Father of Mercies, flying to Christ for refuge, and laying hold upon the horns of the Altar, plead the all-sufficiency of that sacrifice that Christ offered ; condemning your self again and again, and casting your selfe upon the rich and free grace of God in Jesus Christ. Resolve, with seriousness and sincerity, to live in newness of life, and to walk, not in the flesh, but in the spirit. And seeing of your self you can do nothing exactly and acceptably good ( yet let me tell you, by the way, you may

doe more then you doe by your own strength  
 and the help of that common assistance, God hath  
 already given you; and you may forbear many  
 sins, if you will. As appears by the different car-  
 riage of rude sinners; when they are in civil or re-  
 ligious company, they can then keep in their oaths  
 and curses, if they list: and therefore do the best  
 you may, and blame God of backwardness to  
 help you, if you can) seeing, I say, your own  
 strength will not reach so far, as to change  
 your heart and life, and bring you to be truly  
 holy; therefore improve the Covenant of  
 grace, wherein God doth promise to put a new Ezek. 36.  
heart within us, and to cause us to walk in his 25,26,27.  
 statutes, & beg of him daily to work in you both  
 to will and to do of his own good pleasure. If you  
 thus do, let your travel come when it will,  
 and whatever become of your body, your  
 soul cannot miscarry. If also you have  
 wronged any, by slander or unrighteous dea-  
 ling, resolve to make them speedy satisfaction.  
 If you have malice against any person or par-  
 ty whatever, lay it wholly aside. If you have  
 been wronged by any in your name, or other-  
 wise, forgive them, and so will your heavenly Fa- Mat.6.14.  
ther forgive you. But if in any thing there hap- 15.  
 pen a difficulty about restitution, reconcilia-  
 tion, &c. which you are perplexed about;  
 take the advice of some pious and skilful Pa-  
 stor, an interpreter, one of a thousand, who may Job 33.11.  
show to man his righteousness, and who may 23,24.  
 guide your feet into the way of peace, and obey  
 their

their advice speedily. Also, if you be yet puzzled about the right performance of your secret duties, and doubt you have not taken the right way, or that any doubts oppress your mind concerning the pardon of your sinnes, then cast your eyes upon such as fear the Lord, (how much soever you despised or hated them before) such as have mourned in secret for your pride, and have earnestly longed for your conversion, and are themselves practitioners in religious retirements :

**Ps. 25. 14.** *With them*  
**1 Cor. 2. 15** *are the secrets of the Lord.* And therefore un-

**Gal. 6. 1.** *bosome your self to them of such things as are meet to be revealed, and hearken rather to their counsel, then to the discouragements of Satan ; and get them to entertain you into their company, and to remember you in their ordinary and daily prayers, or in some more solemn address to God in your behalf.*

And it is much to be hoped, that the interest of these favourites in the Court of Heaven, may facilitate your reconciliation, and hasten from God an answer of peace. However, if after the use of these and such other meanes, inward fears do still remain, yet resolve, in despight of the Tempter, to continue in a way of duty, and patiently wait upon that God for the joy of his salvation (a) who so long a time waited for your conversion.

**Ps. 33. 20.** The returning Prodigal, though he might take many weary steps in his journey home; yet when he draws near his journeys end, his father

(a) **Psal.**  
**40. 1.**  
**1 Pet. 3.**  
**20.**  
**Ps. 33. 20.**  
**Hos. 12. 6.**  
**Isa. 30. 18.**  
**Lam. 3.**  
**25, 26.**

father meets him, receives him, and entertains him with joy. So though you cannot, in reason, expect that God should presently, upon your repentance, give you assurance of pardon, yet let it satisfy you, that his Word doth assure you; and if you expect any sensible joy, he commonly reserves that best wine till the last; when you draw nearer to your home in heaven, you shall have a clearer sight of his reconciled face. Wherefore, to end this, be you careful to put on the *wedding garment* of Holiness, and whenever you die, you shall have undoubted welcome to that perpetual Banquet in the Kingdome of Glory.

Thus I have given a short draught of what I should more largely have insisted upon, for the conviction, direction, and consolation of them, who have as yet done nothing or little to purpose in their turning to God. But the intended brevity of this Treatise will not permit me to expatiate on every point.

Mat. 22.11.  
Heb. 12.14  
1 Tim. 2.15  
Rom. 6.22

## CHAP. V.

*Preparation for death, the duty of godly women when with child.*

**Y**OU that have tasted the goodness of the Lord, and have given up your selfe to him, must, upon this occasion, sequester your self awhile from all the incumbrances of secular affairs, and deny your self of the usual attendance of any company, and entring into your chamber, shut the door, and give attendance to these things.

Ph.4.8.

77.6.

Lam.3.40

Prov.20.

27.

*Commune with thy own heart, and let thy spirit make diligent search after those secret sins that yet lurk in thy bosome ; rub up thy memory of former sins (even those committed in the dayes of thy ignorance and vanity) remember the wormwood and gall, I mean, how sin was to thee upon thy first conversion ; remember thy relapses any time since, into sins formerly confessed and bewailed, and consider thy unfruitfulness and unsuitable returns to God for his rich mercy in Christ, how little thou hast adorned his Gospel, but rather rendered Godliness less amiable by thy frequent miscarriages. In a word, examine thy sensies, members, thoughts, and inward parts, of all their several evils, and renew thy repentance in that serious and humble manner the Lord requires.*

For

For your sins are ( in some respects) more provoking to God, than the wickednesse of the wicked. More dishonourable to his name; more grievous to his holy Spirit, more displeasing to the good Angels, more advantageous to the evill Angels, more scandalous to the world, and more unbecoming your principles and heavenly hopes. Therefore, as David having sinned against God, wrote many penitentiall Psalms, and shed many a tear day and night; And Solomon, having sinned foulely after God had appeared to him, wrote his recantation, and penitentiall review of his life, in the Book of Ecclesiastes; And the woman ( after she was pardoned ) washed our Saviours feet with her teares, and spent, as histories tell us, many years after in bewailing her sins: So go you and do likewise, rememb're bring the holy Apostle, who sometimes shames himselfe for the sins of his unconverted estate, sometimes bewails the remainders of corruption that abode within him.

And renew also your resolutions of better obedience, and more circumspect walking in all manner of conversation. Chide your heart for its deceitfullnesse, charge your soul to be more mindfull of the *vows of God* that are upon you. Double upon your selfe all possible obligations, to recover what you have lost, and to stir up in you those things that are ready to dye.

Thus you should persevere in the work of  
G con-

Recordari  
volo trans-  
stas fædi-  
tates meas.  
& carnales  
corrupti-  
ones animi,  
non quod  
eas amem,  
sed ut a.  
mem te;  
Deus meus.  
Augustin.  
in Confess.  
lib. 2: c. 1.

confession, lamentation, and supplication, till you find some such answerable effect in your heart, as may assure you, *that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* As our book of Martyrs relates of that famous Martyr, Mr. John Bradford, that he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Christ in the duty, i. e. till he had brought his heart into a more holy frame. He could not leave Confession, till he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for sin; nor Petition, till he had found his heart taken with the beauty of the things he desired; nor could he leave Thanksgiving, till he had found his spirit enlarged, and his soul quickened in the return of praises.

(a) *Nunquam abs te absq; te recedo.*  
Bernard.  
Medit.

(a) Like that of devout Bernard who saith of himself, *that he never went away from God without God.* This is indeed the genius of every Saint, who have known by experience how good it is for them to draw nigh to God. And you have surely found God in the duty, if you find your heart more out of love with yourself and the world, more humbled for sins past, more afraid of every appearance of evil for the future, and more delighting in all those duties, that may promote your graces, and weaken your corruptions in you. But remember, that the duties of humiliation, confession, supplication, must be therefore delighted in because they lead us to God. And, then do we serve him aright when we have learned to delight not in our services but in God. Wherefore raise your

your heart to that *heavenly frame* of thankful- Rev. 19.5  
 nesse, and praise to God, for the eternall Luk. 2.13  
 contrivances of his wisdome and purposes of  
 grace in giving Jesus Christ, for the fulnesse  
 of his promises, the freenesse of his covenant,  
 the sufficiencie of his word, the blessed ope-  
 rations of his spirit, & the transforming power  
 of his grace. Yea, let all that is within you blesse Psal. 103.  
 his holy name for pardon of sin, for all other bene- 1, 2, 3.  
 fits, whether deliverances from evill, or giving  
 you any thing that pertains to life and godli- Psal. 139  
 ness; for any good hope through grace of an inher- 14.  
 itance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in 1 Peter 1.  
 the heavens for you, to which you are kept by the 3, 4, 5.  
 power of God. And really, when I consider,  
 that the whole world lyes in wickednesse, I can-  
 not but praise God in your behalf, who hath  
 called you out of darknesse into his marvellous  
 light, and numbred you among the faithfull.  
 The Lord adde to your number, & inable you  
 by cheerfull and thankfull submission to  
 Christ's easy yoke, to shew forth his praises.

Another good step towards your prepara-  
 tion for death would be, not onely to get a  
 heart truly penitent for sin, and thankfull to  
 God, but also charitable towards all men, that  
 is, to be of an inoffensive and courteous disposi- 1 Cor. 13.  
 tion to the wicked, affectionate to the godly, and 1, 2, 3, 4.  
 compassionate to the needy. But I meane espe- 8. 13.  
 cially this last, of having bowels of mercy to Col. 3. 14.  
 them that be in want, which by way of emi- 1 Tim. 2.  
 nency is commonly called Charity, as charity 15.  
 Rev. 2. 19.  
 G 2 in

in the Greek is called *grace*; Implying, that there is no grace without charity, no evidence of the truth of our charity without liberality. For tis utterly a fault among many rich Ladies and gentlewomen, who yet profess religion, that they care not what they lay out in foolish gaming, immodest dresses, exotick garments &c. But, as if God had no right in any of their wealth, they are loath to understand the duty of charity, or to part with any thing considerable to pious uses, except some small matter to them whom they

**Tim. 6.** cannot for shame deny. Now the Apostle hath directed us, to charge them that are rich in this

world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in God; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Let this full

Scripture serve instead of many. And seeing

**2 Cor. 9.6.** they that sow plentifully shall reap plentifully, therefore put it not off till your last Will, or

til your recovery from travell; but while you have opportunity do good to all but especially to

the household of faith. Doe something for the poore, according as God hath blessed you in

your estate, and as you can obtain your husbands consent ( unlesse you have a consider-

able allowance at your own disposal ) I say do some such eminent work of charity, as may

give a proof of the truth of your love to Christ, and though it cannot expiate any former sins

**2 Cor. 8.**

24.

( Christ

(Christ onely can do that) yet may (in a sense) recompence what hath been defective in this kind; and may cause the poore, while you live, to give you a *disciples reward*, and to *bless you in the name of the Lord*; and may also enable you the better, when, after the resurrection you shal be examined, whether you have cloathed the naked, fed the hungry, visited the prisoners, &c. to give up your account with joy and not with grief.

Mat. 10.

41, 42.

Mat. 25.

35, 36, 37.

&amp;c

In the next place, alienate your heart and affections from all things below heaven, *cast off every weight of worldly desires*, and begin to part with that in your affections, which you may shortly part with in person. Look upon all your comforts, as dying comforts, upon your body as a dying body, upon your house and estate, as fading vanities, which you must shortly forsake. Let not your care about any of these, take up that time, and those thoughts, which you had need at this season to employ otherwise. And that you may the more clearly rid your hands of these things, let me advise you whenever you are with child, if you have any thing considerable of your own to dispose, to make your Will betimes, set your house in order, and then commit your Relations to the blessing of God, & all other things to the pleasure of his providence. And if there be any thing in your mind, to speake to any whom you love, by way of exhortation, advice, admonition, or reproof; doe it speedily, and with all your might. Leave

Lamen. 1. 9

Isa. 50. 4.

Gat. 6. 10.

As strict a charge, as you can upon all that belong to you, to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Your last words to them, if seriously and heartily uttered, with prayer to God for his blessing, may stick more in their minds, than many a Sermon which they have carelessly heard. When the Patriarchs drew near their end, they gave many grave and pious instructions to their Relations; which are therefore left upon record that those that fear God, might imitate them, that so they may die the death of those righteous

*Nam. 23.* persons, and their latter end be like theirs. Our *6.21* Saviour Himself, when he saw the hour *see the 14.* 15, 16, and of his sufferings to approach, spent his time *17. cap. of John.* wholly in comforting, teaching, and establishing disciples, in instituting, and administering the Sacrament of his Supper, and in prayer for them, and all his people to the end of the world. Yea thus the Saints, and Martyrs in all ages, have left us innumerable examples of their pious and moving Speeches, when they were going hence. Thus a Candle when tis at the last point, and ready to go out, gives a sudden flash, and a clearer shine: So you should endeavour, that your last words may be your best words, and your last works your best works.

Having thus eased your heart, as much as may be, from all other cares, and made this faire progresse in your preparation; what remains, but that you look Death in the face, suffering no day to passe without serious thoughts

thoughts upon your latter end, that so by frequent meditation, you may make death more familiar, and lesse terrible to you. Yea that by a right understanding of the nature of death, you may be willing to be dissolved with *Paul*, and ready to say with old *Simeon*, *Now Luk. 2.29;*  
*Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* Wherefore, look upon Death, not as represented to a Sinner, by blind and fearful Nature; but as represented in the Scriptures, to a Believer, sweetned, conquered, and altered by the Death of Christ. Well then, Death hath its harbingers, sickness and pain, which are commonly more troublesome then Death it self. It brings a dissolution of the frame of Nature, a putrefaction of the Body in a *land of darkness*, a departure of the soul into an unknown estate in another world. But what is there, in all this, hurtful? All the messengers and forerunners of death, which torment and destroy our bodies, cannot hinder a Believer from rejoicing, and saying with *David*, *Thy Ps. 115.54 statutes are my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.* And well may they sing on their sick beds, yea, on their death-beds, whom the Lord himself doth attend, to make their beds in their sickness. Old *Jacob*, fainting under a three-fold burthen, of sickness, of age, & the care of his posterity, refresheth himself by turning to the Lord, and waiting for his salvation. As for the dissolution of the frame of *Gen. 49. 18*

Nature, it impairs not your blessedness, nor can cause a disunion from Christ, *Nor life, nor death, nor any other thing, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our*

*Rom. 8. 39 Lord.*

As when Christ died, though the comforting influences of his Divine Nature were suspended, or less visible, yet the hypostatical Union remained inseparable. So in our death, the local separation between body and soul is not a final disunion, much less can there be a cutting off the mystical Union of our persons with Christ. Therefore, though wicked men die in themselves, and die without Christ, as they lived out of him, yet *Rev. 14.13 the servants of God die in Christ, they die to 1 Thes. 4. the Lord, yea, into the Lord, viz. so as to be 14. more nearly joyned to him then before.*

*Rom. 14. 7.8. Phil. 1. 23.* There is in every member of Christ a divine Nature, not subject to death or dissolution. Therefore, though as the children of Men they die, yet as the children of God they live. Though, as the children of Adam, they return to the earth; yet, as the members of Christ, they return to God. And though their bodies die, because severed from their soul, yet it liveth in death, because it is still joyned to the Lord. *God is the God of Abraham, yet not the God of the dead.* Every Atome, and unknown scattered parcel of a believers dust, are deposited in the hands of a faithful Creator. So that though they be dead, yet their life is hid with

with Christ in God. And as for the darkness and putrefaction of the Grave, it matters not; its putrefaction must be, that the garments of our polluted flesh may be changed into one without spot. This Tabernacle, which our sins have defiled, like the Lepers house, must be pulled down, that at the day of the restitu-  
1 Cor. 3.1  
on of all things, it may be made a more glorious body; Untill which day it rests in the Grave, as in a bed of sleep, and finds darkness in a dormitory not inconvenient. And though the soul depart from all the delights and society of men, and no eye can see whither it flies, and into what habitations it enters; though the state of departed souls be a mysterie, which reason may talk of, but never fully discover, yet by Faith we look at the things that are not seen, even the things that are eternal. We know (saith the Apostle) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. Whither I go, ye know,  
Joh. 14:4  
saith Christ, and the way ye know. We know that there is a perfecting of the spirits of just men, that there is an Abrahams Bosome, a Paradise, a Right hand of God, and many mansions in our Fathers house, where they who have believed, do enter into rest. 'Tis, therefore, our idleness of spirit, our slowness of heart to consider, that makes the state of the dead unknown and undesirable; and the joyes of the world to come to be, in a manner, fabulous

Rom.5.13 fabulous and incredible. But surely it would much adde to your peace and joy in believing, if you would oftener lift up the eyes of your minde to the Heaven of Heavens, and by Faith enter into the *Holy of Holies*, and view the Scituacion, Mansions, Treasures, and Delights of the *heavenly Jerusalem*; and you shall soon see, that the present state of Glory, which you enter into at death (not to speak of that far greater measure at the Resurrection) is such, as may abundantly cure all sad apprehensions concerning your departure. What shall I say of your immunities from all temporall evils, from that *vanity and vexation of spirit*, which doth perpetually elude and discruciate the mind? Present evils are innumerable, and future evils are unavoidable: *Sufficient to every day is the evil thereof*, and yet we know not but the morrow may bring forth greater. What a comfort is it to be in a perpetual Ark of safety, wherein we may swim above all waters? To be taken up out of this *miry pit*, and to be taken away from the evil to come, to be out of the reach of hellish tongues, and bloody hands, (*for the dead know nothing at all*, that is, their senseless bodies, and glorified souls, know no misery from all the world can do against them: though the Papists curse and burn their bones for Hereticks; yet they are not touched with the feeling of any infirmity, the dead neither know, nor care any thing at all, what men do for them or against them here

upon earth). Also, what a blessedness is it, to be delivered from the temptation of ill company, and the contagion of the (a) rotten breath of wicked men, and the vexation that is caused to every righteous Lot, in seeing and dallying with them? Wo is me, saith David, that I sojourn in Mesech. Also, to be free of Satans importunate suggestions; to escape him, who is, in these last dayes, come down with great wrath, because his time is but short. Verily, if one knew what opposition the host of evil angels (that fill the regions of the aire) do make against the free ascent of a gracious soul to Heaven; it must needs be, that the joy they conceive of their safe arrival, by the conduct of good Angels, must be very great: this last instance of Satans mad and malicious endeavours, being fresh in their memories. But content must it needs adde, to see the Daughter to destroy the Mother of Mischief: I mean, that whereas Sin is the first Parent of Death, Death onely puts an end to all our sins. Sampson slew many Philistines in his life, but at his death he slew the Lords themselves. So we may mortifie some sins in our life, but at death we triumph over our Master-sinns, yea, all our sins. Yea, let me yet adde, that it is no small part of our gain by Death, to be freed from all laborious Graces and Duties; such as Fear, Hope, Repentance, Watchfulness, Self-denial, &c. Confession, Humiliation, Praying, Hearing, Receiving

*exaudiō λόγος  
Alludit ad  
pomaputris-  
olentia, que  
turband,  
&c. Zanch.  
in Eph.4.*

29.

ving Sacraments, &c. For all these argue Imperfections, Wants, and Corruptions abounding in us. In short, *after death they come to judgement*, have their absolution from God himself, and shall see all debts crossed out of his book of remembrance; are admitted to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have fellowship with the innumerable company of Angels, understand the mysteries they now Pet. 1. 8. believe; and are with him, whom having before not seen, yet they loved, but now rejoice in him with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. But all this contains but that present state of Glory, which they immediately possess after death. But at the Resurrection, when body and soul are reunited, the sentence of Absolution more publickly pronounced, the wicked condemned, time finished, and their whole persons admitted to fulness of glory and happiness; then, I say, there is a great addition made to their felicity; then their souls shall no longer cry, *How long, Lord, holy and true, as they did before, while their bodies were under corruption, & the Church under persecution;* but shall be fully satisfied with the perpetuity of that blessedness and perfection God hath crowned them with. But I list not here to enter into so large a field, as the state of Glory after the Resurrection. Many others have written largely of it: and what I have before spoken of the state of departed Souls, presently after their going hence, does, I think,

think, more properly belong to such considerations, as may help to prepare you for death, that you may not be in bondage with the fear thereof; but having rightly understood it, as now represented, may say, with more assured confidence than wicked Agag, *Surely the bitterness of death is past.*

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## C H A P. XI.

*To resolve upon some special return of thankfulness, after their deliverance, is also the duty of Women with child.*

**H**Ere you must rightly understand, what I do not mean in this direction, as well as what I do mean. Know, therefore, that I do not desire to draw you into rash vowes, no, nor indeed to any vowes at all. I observe it too common among afflicted persons, perhaps 'tis so also among women with child, to make many vowes, that if ever God deliver them, they will leave such a sin, abound in such a duty, decline such and such temptations; read so much, and so often, &c. But I have also observed, that such vowes seldom end well. I could relate sad instances of some whom I have known, who, after the commission of some foul sin, have, in my presence, expressed as credible serious repen-

tance,

tance, as ever I could desire, yea, have, to my  
seeming, been in utter despair for the present; so  
that I have been not a little troubled to get  
them to believe, that their sins were pardonable,  
and their souls not past remedy, & when at last  
they began to apprehend any hope, they have up-  
on a sudden, ere I was aware, made vows, Ne-  
ver more to come near such and such compa-  
nions, and places of temptation; yea, have also se-  
conded these their vowes with immediate earnest  
prayer to God in secret, for his assistance: and  
yet have (to my knowledge) risen from their  
knees, and gone immediately to the same wicked  
practice, and been as deeply plunged as before,  
and then been in the same trouble again, make  
the like vows again, and relapsed in like manner  
again. This, I say, I have known, and seri-  
ously considering of the matter, I cannot assign  
any other cause thereof, then this, That those  
vowes were unmARRANTABLE, and God would not  
be intreated to give his blessing to that for which  
he had never given his command. For though

Tileni syn-  
tag. disp. 43  
in tertium  
præceptum,  
p. 267.

in the Old Testament there is as clear exam-  
ples of paying Vowes, as of offering a Sacri-  
fice. yet in the New Testament, he who com-  
missioned his Ministers to teach us to observe  
whatsoever he had cōmanded (though he is gra-  
ciously pleased to condescend to many partic-  
ulars, that might seem of less concernment,  
yet) gave no instruction to his Apostles or  
Ministers, to prescribe making Vowes, as a  
help to holiness, or a remedy against sin or  
tempta-

temptation. So that, unless it were agreeable to his will, it will hardly conduce to his glory. Besides, when we vow any thing, it must be either a thing commanded and necessary, or uncommanded. To vow to do a thing commanded of God, is needless. For his command layes a greater obligation upon us already. And if the thing vowed be uncommanded, then it is not necessary; and consequently, it must be dangerous to lay our selves under necessity of doing that which our great Law-giver never made necessary. For this vow of unnecessary things must be either absolute, or conditional. An absolute vow layes us under the snare of impossibilities, yea, under the danger of sin; a conditional vow carries with it the danger of inconstancy; such vows being seldom held of much force, because circumstances may so often vary, that they may quickly seem discharged of their voses. As for instance, Suppose you make a vow, If God shall recover you, to give so much to the poor, to read so many chapters a day, to pray so often, or the like. This is an absolute vow. And now, if Providence render it impossible to give so much, without great prejudice to your family-necessities, or to read or pray so often, without danger of your health, or omitting some more necessary and seasonable good; in this case you cannot possibly keep your vow without sin. If your vow be conditional to give so much, if you can

spare

spare it, to read and pray so much, if you have leisure and strength : this is needlessly vowed, for you are already bound by your vow in Baptism, and by the common bonds of Religion, to give what you can to the poor , and to serve God with all your might, and to redeem your time for him. *And tis better to doe what we do for God, out of conscientious obedience to his Law, then out of superstitious observation of voluntary vows* For who hath required this at your hands?

**Perkins**  
*caus.of cons.*  
**lib. 2.c. 1.**  
*qu. 2.page.*  
**(mibi) 97.**

The Papists do exceed all other Sects in variety of Religious vows, not onely abounding in the use of them, but in the grossest abuse, making vows of Contineancy, regular obedience,&c. to be meritorious, above all other good works commanded in the morall Law. The very naming of such bold impiety is sufficient to render it ridiculous to all that have the *Law of God written in their hearts*. Wherefore to conclude this busynesse of vows, I say with

**(a)B. Hals** a **(a)** reverend Author speaking of the unhappy vow of Zephja; *The conscience shall never find peace in any way, but that which we see before us, and which we know safe both in the kind and circumstances. There is no comfort in, Peradventure I may please God. Therefore be very cautious of making any vows, and seriously consider, and candidly accept my opinion herein, that the safest way is to let them alone.* But now tis time to shew you what I do mean by these Religious purposes,

I mean, that you should consider seriously how defective you have been, in prosecution of those Religious ends, that the Gospel and your holyprofession doth mind you of, and that you would firmly purpose and resolve with your selfe, to endeavour to do more for God than yet you have done. As for instance; suppose your resolutions be, of avoiding some evill, or some occasion or appearance of evill, or something that doth hinder that which is good; as to resolve (supposing you are by your quality concerned herein) to abridge your selfe of some of your gallanery, to be more frugall in your apparell, and not to be a slave to the people of this Generation, nor so follow every ridiculous and apish passion of this World; To spend lesse time in your tedious dressing and trimming every morning, and to redeem some of it, for the holding your sins in the glasse of the Law, and Christ in the glasse of the Gospel, that you may trim your soul and adorn it after the likenesse of Christ; or to spend lesse time and money in gaming; or to be more seldom in idle visits, especially of such as will not endure in their company, any talke of God, whether in good sort or in bad (as the Jesuits once prohibited) but are wholly addicted to such evil communication as corrupts good manners. Or if you would resolve upon any thing positively good, or praiseworthy and of good report, as, To be more constant, frequent, labortous, in your closer Devotions; to be more carefull of your family, that it may not be

1 Tim. 2.  
9. 10.  
Exod. 38.  
8.  
Mellus est  
babere ma-  
lorum odit  
qnam con-  
sortium.  
Bern. de  
modo bene  
vivendi.  
serm. 60.  
Prov. 31.  
27.

acage of unclean birds, and a habitation of Devils, but a household of faith, wherein all wickednesse shall at least hide its head, and the duties of Religion and Profession of Godliness, have more countenance and reputation; or to be more severe to your children (I abhor cruelty and passionate hasty corrections) I meane to get free of that accursed fondnesse, whereby so many children have beeene curses to their parents on earth, and cursed firebyrds in hell at their death. Remember old Eli, and be not partaker of his sins, lest you be partaker of his plagues. Or if you resolute to take more notice of your godly neighbours about you, who are made as the off-scouring of the world, and to make it more manifest that your delight is in the Saints, and that you hate them that hate the Lord, yea hate them with perfect hatred and count them your enemies. Or if you would remember who have

(a) Divitis superflua provoked and offended you, by flandering you otherwise, and now shew your selfe courtesies and love to them especially; requiting them good for evill, and never remembiring or upbraiding them with their offensive miscarriages towards you. Or if you would resolve to spare somewhat more from your superfluities (a) and sinfull expences, for the preservation of the lives of many starving poor; and, to that end, alway keep a stock by you, to lay out, as occasion shall require, for pious uses: (b) yea if you sought out objects of your charity, and sent to some of the more modest poor, to know how 'tis with them, that

Aug in

Ps-147.

(b) R. Bob-  
ons Gen-

Direc. p.

62

Exod. 23.

S.

that you might buy or make cloaths for the naked, as Dorcas did, and every good woman, as Prov. 31. Solomon describes her, should doe, and get <sup>20.</sup> food for the hungry, physick for the sick, harbour for the destitute, imployment for the diligent &c. This was a motive to Peter to raise up Dorcas, that she had clothed the poor widows. And this, saies one, was the practice of the blessed Virgin, who having great gifts from the three wise men, (a) that followed the star, yet bestowed all on the poor, and shortly after, at her purification, had but two turtle Doves or two young Pigeons to offer, which was, by Gods appointment, the manner of the poorer Jews, who were not able to buy a lambe. Thus I have given divers instances of such particulars as you may make the matter of pious Resolution. And if in these, or any other of like nature, you fix your intentions of abounding more, and growing more fruitfull in every good work; it will be, doublefle, thank-worthy with God, if he see your heart thus firmly bent to observe that precept of his, Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorifie me. How would you glorifie God, when he delivers you? What, by a meer verbal acknowledgement, and not by some signall testimony of your thankefullnesse, and some fiteable return for so great a mercy? Wherefore, I say again, resolve, if God deliver you, to be more faishfull to your principles, more userfull in your generation, more alive to God, more

(a) Supponendum est quod illa munera panperibus erogaverat N. Hunap. Patr. Hierosul. viro tutu dicitur tiorum exempla. cap. 125. p. 166 Levit. 5. 7.

affectionate to Christ and his members, more dead to the world, more eminent in some particular service to God, whereby you may shew forth his praise, and acknowledge him in your works, and shine with your light before men. And thus having in some measure dispatched the duties before mentioned, you may the more boldly addresse your self to what next follows, viz, to exercise and strengthen your faith.

## CHAP. XII

To labour for faith in Christ, or, if they have faith, to endeavour to exercise it, in trust and dependance upon God for pardon of sin, is also the duty of Women with child.

**T**O get faith, and to get an interest in Christ, are great words, & more commonly spoken than understood. Know therefore, that faith is not a beleeving that I am pardoned, or that I have true grace, and shall certainly be saved, this is not the nature, but fruit, of justifying faith. But, Faith is a believing the Gospel, which represents and offers Christ to us, as the onely all sufficient Saviour, and the receiving him as such. Faith looks on Christ as revealed in his word, to be our Priest, Prophet, and King, or the way, the truth, and the life. Accordingly, it causeth us, to renounce our own Righteousness,

ness; to renounce our own Reason, and to believe all mysteries of godliness, upon his bare Word (thus becoming fools that we may be wise in him), and to deny our selves, and renounce our own wills, and all things that oppose themselves against Christ, and to make his will our supreme rule in all our actions. Thus faith receives Christ, with all his benefits, graces, laws; yea with his yoke, crosse, reproach; counting the treasures of the world as nothing, in comparison of the *meanest and poorest* things, that appertain to Christ, and have his name upon them. So that they who thus receive Christ, believe in him, & are justified by him, yield to Christ the *chief interest in all* that is theirs; in their understanding by believing him, in their affections by loving him, in their wills by obeying him, in their time, strength, estate, and all things they are or have, by serving him with their whole heart, their whole soul, and their whole strength, all their dayes. *And such have doubtlesse an interest in Christ.* Wherefore if you doubt, complain, and torment your self with such inward feares as would all be removed, *if you once knew that you believed, and had an interest in Christ;* then stir up your self, now, to receive him as he is offered, be willing to be saved by him in his own way, let his interest prevail in you above all other interests; and you shall find that, *faithfull and obedient compliance with him, will sooner bring comfort than*

meer complaints.' Be not then slothfull in this busynesse, but fervent in spirit, seeking the Lord, for increase of faith and help against your infidelity. Doe not by a heart of unbelief depart in the least, from him, upon any termes; but lay aside every sin that hath easily beset you, (else your complaints are not in earnest); patiently persevere in well doing, and in a way of holiness accept comfort. (Yet look not presently and too eagerly for a high measure of sensible joy and assurance; for that is scarce a promised mercy, given to a few who are most eminently holy, and with them it doth not always abide neither). And if you are wholly without joy or peace in thus believing, you are not strightned in God, but in your selfe, because you either retain some sin, which grieves the Spirit, or listen to temptations, or cherish your fears, and refuse to be comforted. Wherefore for your further help consider, the freeness, fulnesse, suitablenesse, and multitude of those exceeding great and precious Promises, whereby you have all things that pertain to life and godlinesse; promises of pardon, and promises of deliverance; promises to your soul, and to your body; promises of all needfull good, and of all things working together for good in this life; and promises of all good, in the enjoyment of God who is the chief good, and that with life everlasting. Search then the Scriptures, peruse your Charter, read the last Will and Testament of

of Jesus Christ, and pick out, and observe such promises, as will sufficiently reach you, in this or any condition imaginable. In so great variety, as the storehouse of Scripture affords, I shall set only some few before your eyes.

### Promises of pardon of sin.

*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.* Isa. 57: 17

*I will cleanse them from all their iniquities, Ezek. 37: 23. and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have transgressed, and whereby they have sinned against me.*

*I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember thy sins.* Isa. 43: 25.

*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth Micah. 7: iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?* 18.

*I will be mercifull to their unrighteousnesse, Heb. 8: 12 and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

*Be it known unto you all, men and brethren, Act. 13: 38. that through this man, is preached unto you forgiveness of sins.*

*Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Mat. 11: 28

*Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement* Isa. 53: 4. 5.

stement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**Act 10.43** To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

**Act 13.39** And, by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.

**Rom. 3.25** We are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for remission of sins that are past.

Many other places of this nature you may turn to at your leisure. As, Isa. 33.24. Mat. 12.31. James 5.15. Psal. 130.4. Dan. 9.9. Exod. 34.7. Luke 1.77. Luke 24.47. Mat. 26.28. John 20.23. Rom. 4.25. Rom. 5.16,18. Rom. 8.33.

And if you think your sinns greater then ordinary, yet be not so weak, as to count that any bar or impediment to saving grace. To Omnipotency there is nothing great, nothing difficult; to infinite love nothing is troublesome, or can be a hinderance. God, who commands us to forgive till seventy times

seven, can as easily forgive a thousand talents  
as a hundred pence. What is our Bucket to  
his Ocean? If you give your hope and your  
soul for lost, yet he came to seek and to save Luk.19.10  
*that which is lost.* He delighted to cure the  
most desperate diseases, when he was upon  
earth. And he usually healed body and soul  
together, and told them, that their sinnes were  
forgiven them, as well as that they should arise  
and walk. Many of those sinners that Christ  
shewed mercy to, were most infamous, and,  
to mens seeming, as unlikely to have been  
saved, as any of that generation. What  
think you of *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom  
our Saviour cast seven devils? and of that  
woman that washed his feet with her teares?  
who, though a notorious known sinner (an  
harlot) yet had all her sins forgiven her, & our  
Saviour largely defending and explaining the  
freeness of his grace to her? What of the wo-  
man taken in adultery, whom our Saviour did  
not condemn, but, with charge to sin no more,  
dismissed her in peace? What think you of  
the Apostle himself, who thus speaks? *For we*  
*our selves were sometime foolish and disobedient,*  
*deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasure,* li-  
*ving in malice and envy, hateful, and hating*  
*one another. But after that the kindness and love*  
*of God our Saviour toward man appeared;* not  
*by works of righteousness, which we have done,*  
*but according to his mercy he saved us.* *That*  
*being justified by his grace, we should be made*  
*heirs*

Luke 8.26

Luk.7.37,  
38,39,&c.John 8.  
10,11.cTitus 3.3  
4,5,7.

**1 Pet. 4.3.** heirs according to the hope of eternal life. What of Peter, and the converted Jewes, who had walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatrie? **1 Pet. 1.3,** tries; and in the former lusts in their ignorance; **4, &c.**

yet of such sinners he saies, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

It were endless to heap up all examples in this kind. You shall doe well to see what the Colossians were, when

**Col. 3.5,** they lived and walked in fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, &c. **6,7.**

**1 Cor. 5.9,** they were Fornicators, Idolaters, Sodomites,

**10,11.** Thieves, Drunkards, &c. yet now are washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,

and by the Spirit of our God. And was it for their sakes onely, that God shewed mercy to them? No: but also to encourage us, when heavy-laden with sin, to expect the like. For so the Apostle, more then once, doth assure

**Eph. 2.1,** us. As when he speaks of the Ephesians, and **2,3,4,5,** himself, and all believers, that in times past **&c.**

they were over-ruled by the Devil, and the world, and their own lusts, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickned us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made no fit together in heavenly places, in Christ

Jesus

Jesus, That in the ages to come he might shew  
the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness  
towards us through Jesus Christ. To the same  
purpose is that other excellent passage of his ;  
This is a faibfull saying, and worthy of all <sup>1 Tim. 1.</sup>  
acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world <sup>25, 16.</sup>  
to save sinners, whereof I am chief. Howbeit, for  
this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first, Je-  
sus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering,  
for a pattern to them which should hereafter be-  
lieve on him to life everlasting.

To conclude this, I shall onely adde the ob-  
servation of a blessed Author. In the Genealo-  
gie of Christ there are but four women mention-  
ed, and they are all branded with a mark of in-  
famy in Scripture-story. The first is Thamar,  
Mat. 1. 3. she was incestuous, for she lay with her  
father-in-law, Gen. 38. 38. 2. Rahab an har-  
lot, Heb. 11. 31. 3. Ruth, who came of Moab  
the son Levi, by incest with his own daughter,  
Gen. 19. 37. 4. Bathsheba, and she was guilty  
of adultery. Why is all this, but to shew  
that free grace is no respecter of persons, ex-  
cept it be to have most tender regard to the  
most miserable object, and to pardon those  
most readily, who see themselves most guilty  
and to wash them as white as snow, whose  
sins were of a scarlet dye. And for your fur-  
ther increase of faith, I would advise you, if  
you can conveniently have it, that you would,  
with all humility, and earnest desires of fa-  
vour with God, go to the Sacrament of the

Mr. Love,  
his Zealous  
Christian.

Lords

Lords Supper, the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, where you may see Christ crucified for you, and may receive such symbols and pledges of his good-will towards you, as will be so many Seals to his Promises; Joh. 6.53, and there you shall find his flesh to be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed. He is the living bread, which shall strengthen your heart, and his love is stronger then wine, and shall make glad your heart. I doubt, that the setdowne or careless use of this blessed ordinance is one great cause why so many Christians are of weak faith. And if, with other endeavours and inquiries for comfort, this were more frequently and rightly used, we should find their strangeness from God (which is the chief cause of their fears) to cease; and delight in him, and love to him, and consequently, peace of conscience to increase, by this neerer converse and communion with him. Mary Magdalene, as they say, being near her end, came and received the Body and Blood of our Lord in the place of their Christian assembly, and there comfortably expired before the Table of the Lord.

Also peruse Davids Psalms, and, as you easily may, take notice of those especially, that contain complaints of Sin, Fear, Calamities, and also praises to God for hearing and delivering, and promises of the like mercy of God to all his people in their several exigencies. And sing these Psalms, leisurely and considerately alone by your self. You will find the voice

voice to quicken your meditation upon the matter, the matter to affect your heart, and the blessing of God to attend his owne ordinance, who hath commanded us to admonish our selves (a) in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs. Besides, it is most unquestionably pleasant to those good Angels, who are ministering Spirits to attend you for good.

But if you are not satisfied, by Promises, Sacraments, Psalms, &c. then look beyond all these, to the goodness of God, which is infinite. His goodness is the fountain of the promises, and therefore it is, that the streams make glad the people of God. Now it is an acceptable work of Faith, if we cannot see a Promise speaking directly to us, or are not able to apply them, yet even then to cast our selves upon infinite goodness, to trust in the name of the Lord, and to stay our selves upon our God. For his Goodness contains more in it, then Promises do express. It never entered into the tongues of men or Angels, fully to express the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. Let this, therefore, keep you in a dutiful and quiet expectation of comfort, that there is mercy with God, an inexhaustible treasure of mercy, riches of grace, an overflowing fulness, which can as well cease to be, as to be faithful and compassionate, indwelling with the contrite and humble hearts, to revive the hearts of the humble, and to revive the spirits of the contrite ones.

*Isa. 50. 10.  
Psal. 9. 10.*

*Isa. 57. 15.*

## C H A P. XIII.

*Trusting in the Lord for deliverance, the duty  
of women with child.*

**T**Hough trusting in God exclude not the use of means, and Gods providence over us doth not discharge us from provision for our selves, and preventing what we can of the danger and hurt of any approaching evil; yet it surely excludes our trust in any thing besides him. And therefore, whatever estate, friends helps, strength, you have; yet trust not to these. For God only brings to the birth, and gives strength to bring forth. Rachels Midwife could bid her be of good comfort; but she could not give her the comfort of a happy deliverance. Miserable comforters are Midwives, Neighbours, and Kindred, if God withhold the fruit of the womb. And if he speak the word (after others have tormented the labouring woman, and tried themselves with fruitless endeavours, and at last given over any hopes of success,) I say, if he speak the word, she shall soon be delivered; for, *He shutteth and none can open, he openeth and none can shut; he letteth and none can work, he worketh and none can let.* He can let out the imprisoned

imprisoned infant, raise up the fainting mother; bring strength out of weakness, and life out of death. Wherefore, furnishing your self with such promises as he hath made to his people in all their extremities, strengthen your faith, hope in the Lord, and quietly wait for his salvation.

Among the many promises of this kind, I shall mention a few which are obvious, and leave you to observe the rest in your own private reading.

His anger endureth but a moment: in his favour is life: Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the soules which I have made.

Like a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him: For he knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are but dust.

By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.

When we are judged, we are chastned of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

For our light affliction, which is but for a

moment, worketh for us a far more eternal and exceeding weight of glory.

**Job 5. 13.** He maketh sore, and he bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

**Ver. 19.** He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

**Ps. 33. 18.** Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy: to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.

**Ps. 34. 17.** The righteous cry, and the Lord beareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

**Ps. 46. 1.** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

**Ma. 41. 10.** Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

**Ma. 49. 14.** For God hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palmes of my hands, &c.

**Psal. 92.  
14. 15.** Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he hath trusted in thee. Isa.26.3;

*Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* Ps.55.22.

*Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.* Ps.62.1.5

*My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from him.*

With many other like plates. Now what can we expect for higher assurance, than such reiterated promises of that God, with whom it is impossible to lie. David, therefore, who was (more than ordinary) experienced in variety of afflictions, and the comforting power of the VVord under them, tells us, I had fainted, unless I had believed, to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. And thus plead with God, Remember thy Word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. And again, This is my comfort in mine affliction, for thy Word hath quickened me.

Let me here crave leave to transcribe a few sweet passages out of an excellent Author, than whom none hath written more judiciously, piously, and plainly, in our English tongue.

(\*) The godly are allowed to live by Faith in times of affliction, when calamities of all sorts

Mr. Ball's  
Treat. of  
Faith, par.  
2. ch. 7. Pt.  
318,

compassie them about. For, Godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come.

**I Tim. 4.8** God hath promised, that all things shall work together for good, to them that love him, and **Rom. 8.28** that he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able. And it is our duty to believe **I Cor. 10.**

**Act. 27.25** God, that it shall be even as he hath told us.

The godly have had this confidence in former times, whose practice is both a token of our priviledge, and a pattern of our duty. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* Though

**Psal. 56.3.** *I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,*

**Psal. 23.4.** *I will fear no evil. For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staffe they comfort me.*

God is hereby much glorified, that we rely upon him, as our rock of defence, all-sufficient Saviour, and surest friend, in time of distresse. It

**Psal 68.5.** being one of his most royal titles, to be a re-

**& 9.9.** *fruge for the oppressed, a help to the poor, strength*

**& 10.14.** *to the needy, &c. And therefore will the Lord*

**Ma. 25.4.** *wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and*

**& 30.18.** *therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.*

Confidence in God doth the more bind and oblige him, as it were, to do us good.

**Psal. 37.40.** If a friend rely upon our faithful promise, we take our selves bound, not to frustrate his expectation at a dead lift.

The Lord will never leave the soul destitute which trusts in him. The faithful have promised themselves help, because they trusted in the Lord, **Psal. 57.1. &c. 143.8,9.** And so hope in

God,

God, and to have God for our help, are linked together in Scripture. Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help; whose hope is in the Lord his God. After serious humiliation of the soul, Faith brings tidings, that God will look down from Heaven in mercy, and bring help in fittest season. If their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they accept of the punishment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, &c. When I fall I shall rise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me.

Deut. 4.  
29, 31, 32.

This dependance on the Promises, which Faith worketh, is absolute, without limitation of time, measure of affliction, or manner of deliverance. All these it referreth to the good pleasure of his Will, and reposeth it self securely on his faithful Word and Providence. Fear rides post to out-run Danger, and Folly would soon dispatch our mourning part, to be in the house of laughter: but he that believeth, maketh not haste; knowing that Gods truth never faileth, his wisdothe chuseth the fittest meanes and season, and his Compassion is readiest, when, to sense and reason, it is furthest off. Thus he:

But seeing these Promises forementioned are general, and you would willingly see (perhaps) something more expressly fitted to your own condition, therefore I shall subjoyn a few other Scriptures, which may abundantly satisfie in this case.

*It is the heart of Righteousness*

- 11. 46. 3, 4.** Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you, and will deliver you.
- Luke 1. 13, 14.** Fear not Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth.
- John 16. 21.** A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of a child, she remembreth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. Through faith in him that promised, Sarah received strength to conceive and to bring forth.
- Heb. 11. 11.** Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in the faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety. This last place is most full and remarkable: for the Apostle had said immediately before, that the woman was first in the transgression. Now this transgression deserved all misery, pain, and torment, both here and hereafter, without any hope of end or deliverance: but see the goodness and mercy of our God! saith he, notwithstanding her sin, God will save her, notwithstanding the curse, God will bless her. For the curse that came upon women at first, is wonderfully moderated, and the rigour thereof abated, even from the first denunciation thereof. Though God had newly cursed the earth, yet he had respect to Abel and his offering. Though

he cursed man, yet it is not an onely curse, but a command and is a blessing annext, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread.* Here is indeed a curse, that their labour should be wearisome; but a command, that they should labour; and a promise, that in so doing, they should have bread to eat. So, I say, is the curse upon women, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception:* *In sorrow shalt thou bring forth.* This sorrow and pain is the Curse; but it is presently sweetned with a promise of bringing forth. So that notwithstanding the danger of this Curse, Eve was (through Mercy) the Mother of many Children; and notwithstanding you all inherit the same curse, yet you are capable of the same blessing. And, in a word, if you continue in Faith, Charity, Holiness, and Sobriety, you shall find, that though you are a daughter of Eve, yet you shall be saved.

To which purpose, a Reverend Author (<sup>a</sup>) hath these words. ‘Afflictions have this advantage, that they occasion God to shew that mercy to us, whereof the prosperous are uncapable. It would not beseem a Mother to be so indulgent to a healthfull Child, as to a sick. It was to Manoah’s wife that the Angel appeared, not to her husband—for that the birth of the child would cost her more dear then her husband.— As Satan layes his batteries ever to the weakest; so, contrarily, God addresseth his comforts to

(a) Bish.  
Hall  
cont.lib.  
no. p. 186.

{ those hearts, that have most need, As at the  
 first, because *Eve* had most reason to be de-  
 jected, for that her sin had drawn Man into  
 the transgression, therefore the Cordial of  
 God most respecteth her; The seed of the  
 woman shall break the Serpents head. *Thus*  
*far be.* And surely we cannot imagine any  
 higher reason, why God suffered the first sin  
 to be, and to bring so much sin and misery  
 upon us; but that the more miserable we are,  
 the more would the glory of his grace appear,  
 in pardoning and saving us in the second A-  
 dam. And why would God have suffered sin to  
 bring such pain & danger upon women in tra-  
 vel, but 't was his will, that there should ever be,  
 while the world stands, that most eminent ob-  
 ject and instance of his delivering power. For  
 thus it hath pleased our Supreme Ruler and  
 Creatour, that his servants should be brought  
 low, that he may then help them. Of this  
 we have plentifull experiments in his provi-  
 dences towards men and women. And if you  
 would be armed against despondency, and  
 have your trust and hope in God confirmed,  
 you must make great reckoning of those hap-  
 py experiences of Gods seasonable help,  
 which he hath at any time vouchsafed to you  
 or others. *If so be that you have tasted, that*  
*the Lord is gracious, that he hath heard your*  
*voice and your supplication, what should hinder*  
*you from expecting the same mercy from*  
*him, when you are in the like need, if he see*

it to be for your good? You cannot but know, that many sinfull, weak, helpless women, have been delivered even without means, have been raised up from the gates of death, been satisfyed with long life, and have seen their childrens children. Who so is wise and will ob- Psal. 107.  
43.serve these things, even they shall understand the loving kindesse of the Lord. Rom. 5.4.

Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. If we have learned patience under former tribulations, & had experience of Gods remebering mercy in judgement, this should produce hope in us of the like help from him for the future.

What other thing made the Apostle in R. Rogers great afflictions to stay himself upon God, and cast his care on him, but this experience and long proof he had of Gods tender care over him. Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver us, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. And again, I was delivered out of the mouth of Lyon, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evill work, and will preserve me to his heavenly Kingdom. 2 Cor. 1.1c.  
2 Tim. 4.17, 18.

Yea, long before him, we find David thus reasoning, The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon and the paw of the Bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And again, Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. 2 Sam. 17.  
36, 37.  
Psal. 63.7.

Our Fathers trusted in thee, they trusted and

Psal. 32,  
 1, 5.  
 Psal. 30.  
 2, 3, 4, 5.  
 2, 9, 10,  
 11, 12.  
 Psal. 31.  
 7, 13, vers.  
 22, 23,  
 24.  
 The like  
 passages  
 in the 32,  
 33, and 34  
 Psalms.  
 Joh. 1, 5.  
 Heb. 13, 5.  
 6.

those didst deliver them: they cried unto thee and were delivered, they trusted in thee and were not confounded. Many such excellent passages to this purpose you may observe in other places, especially in the Psalms, as you may see in the places quoted in the margin. And 'tis observable, that David makes his own experiences a ground for others confidence. As doth also the Apostle, when he quotes that promise made to Joshua, and applies it to every believer, *He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.* So that we may boldly say, *the Lord is my helper.* And so St. James; *Because Elias (who was a man subject to like passions as we are), was heard for rain, and a gain for dry weather,* therefore all Christians may expect much benefit in their sicknesse, from the prayers of the faithfull.

Wherefore seeing Eve, the first Author of your infirmities, and Sarah, Rebekah, Hagar, Ruth, and all others recorded in Scripture, were women of like passions and infirmities with you; and many of your neighbours, who are as great, (if not greater) sinners than your self, have this usuall benefit of Gods delivering power and mercy, therefore you may undoubtedly conclude, and boldly say, *the Lord is my helper.*

Consider also that God, who is over all, in all, and through all, extends his care herein to all his creatures. There is nothing so difficult but 'tis under his power, nothing so small but 'tis under

under his care. His providence watcheth over the Fowls of the ayr, and the Beasts of the field, in producing their young. And there is no more clearer argument, that there is a providence of God over all the world, than the conservation of the species and kinds of all creatures in a continuall succession. Insomuch that we find a speciall expresse law in the behalf of Birds in the time of their incubation, that while the Dam was sitting upon her egges or young ones, she must not be taken, but let go free; Deut. 23.  
6.7. and this with a severe charge, and promise of much good upon the observation of it. And wherefore is such mention made of the Ostrich by the Lord himself, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and takes no farther care of them, Job. 39.13.  
14,15,16.  
17. contrary to the nature of all other Birds, but exposes them in the warme sand to the benefit of the Sun to hatch them; I say, Why is this mentioned, but to intimate the power and care of God, who delivers their eggs and young ones from being crushed, and causes those Birds still to increase and multiply. Again, we find that God hath a care of the Beasts in this condition. Therefore he promised the Isralites that among their cattle none should be barren or cast their young. And Exod 23.  
26. though (sometimes) the voice of the Lord maketh the Hindes to calve; that is, Terrible claps of thunder cause some beasts to cast their young sooner than ordinary; Yet his providence doth generally watch over every beast of

of the forest, to cause them to bring forth  
 Job. 39. 1. their fruit in season, and to cast out their sor-  
 3. 3. rows; even the wild goats of the rock partake of  
 this benefit from him. And men also are ge-  
 nerally carefull of beasts in this condition, as

Gen. 31. Jacob took speciall care of Labans cattle,  
 3. & 33. that they did not cast their young; and in  
 3. driving his own cattle, when he met his  
 Brother Esau, he was mindfull to go such a  
 pace, as might not hurt any creature with young.

*David*, when a shepheard, exprestes that  
 Calling by following the ewes great with young.  
 Implying, that his care of them, was double  
 to what he had of therest of his flock.

Hence it is, that when God would set forth  
 to us the mild and gracious conduct of the  
 Captain of our salvation Jesus Christ, 'tis thus

expressed, *He shall feed his flock like a sheep-  
 heard, he shall gather the Lambs with his arms,  
 and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently  
 lead those that are with young.* That is, shall  
 use like tendernesse and indulgence to the  
 weak and infirm, as all sober men do to crea-  
 tures that are with young. Now, Is a good  
 man mercifull to his beast, and is not our good

God mercifull to his children in that condi-  
 tion? Doth God take care for souls, fishes,  
 and beasts, even every beast of the forest, and  
 doth he not much more take care of you, O ye of  
 little faith? Hath he not implanted in all men  
 a most tender regard to teeming women?  
 Whence came else that law of the Areopagites,

(whose

(whose famous laws were patterns to many nations) the like whereof, (or, at least, the like custome) we have in England, that, be a woman never so flagitious, and unworthy to live, yet if she be with child, that shall privilege her from the stroak of death, till she be delivered and gotten to some strength. I say, the Father of mercy doth infuse this compassion into the minds of all men; and not only so, but hath given a most severe Law, for the sharp punishment of all men, that shall accidentally hurt a woman with child, that they shall give life for life, and limb for limb, or what ever punishment the husband shall think fit.

Now what greater evidence would you have, of the mercifull regard of our God and Saviour, than the particulars I have here proposed? So that it must needs be a thing unreasonable in you, and displeasing to him, not to trust in his name, and to cast all your cares, fears, and burthens upon him.

To all which, let me adde the consideration of his *alsufficiencie* to help you in that condition; and this you will find, if well considered, to be the *surest support* you can fix your thoughts upon.

All creatures, by the instinct of nature, and providential gubernation, are apprehensive of approaching dangers, and use the best means they can to secure themselves. The subtle Foxes have holes, the foolish Deer their thickets,

*v' regem  
verbavimus  
rem' read  
mission  
apud  
Aelian. var.  
hist. lib. 5.  
p. (mibi)  
404.*

*Exod. 21.  
22,23,24.*

kets, and the conies, though a simple folk, yet make they their holes in such rocks and precipices, from whence no hand can pluck them. The wary Bird, espying the gun or snare of the Fowler, mounts aloft, and is safe from danger. Wherefore, when you grow bigger and bigger, and your heart grows big with fearful expectations of your approaching danger, should you not pray, that God would lead you to the rock that is higher then you; which Rock is Christ? Should you not look upwards, and ascend upwards daily in your thoughts, that so you may get above the hurt and peril of any affliction, yea, of death it self? Do you not observe, that among creatures, those are most active and powerfull, that are furthest elevated and removed from gross matter? You therefore extract, distill, &c. that you may have the quintessence and vertue of any herb more compendiously and effectually usefull in your time of need. You see also, the water is more active then the dull earth, the aire then the water, the fire then either of the three; and Angels excel (men, and all elements, and all creatures) in strength; and God doth yet further exceed them then they do a worm. Therefore to whom should you go, but to him, who onely hath the power of life and death?

It is both commendable and common in repenting sinners, to count themselves with the Apostle, chief sinners (because of some peculiar circum-

circumstances they elpy in their own sins, which they have cause to think are not common to be found in the sins of others.) But it is more common than commendable in afflicted persons, to aggravate their sorrows, like those in the Prophet, Behold and see! Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow? &c. So perhaps you think there is none so like to miscarry and perish, none ever more unlikely to live than you. This is, doubtless, your folly. For what improbabilities or seeming impossibilities can you labour under, which many others have not been exercised with and delivered from? There is no new thing under the sun. Unless you are resolved to believe nothing but your own unbelieving heart; you may hear and know of many, that have been, as weak, sickly, bruised, hurt, diseased, and sufficiently afraid, yet have been safely delivered. But, be it so, that your case is singular and worse than ordinary; yet, cannot you say with the Apostle; *I know, whom I have trusted that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him?* Believers trust not in an arme of flesh (that is cursed;) nor do their hearts depart from the Living God; but they trust in him, whose Name is a sure Refuge, whose Promise is a sufficient Security, whose compassion is a sufficient Motive to do good, and whose Power is al sufficient to accomplish it.

Jer. 17.5.

Therefore is remarkable that in the Old Testa-

Testament God did often exercise his handmaids with many improbabilities, before they had any children. As you may see in the Stories of *Sarah*, *Rebekah*, *Rachel*, *Leah*, *Hannah*, *Elizabeth*, and others. Now, they considered not their own bodies though dead, that is, past the usual time of nature for child-bearing; but, trusting in him who was able to create that which was not, or to quicken that which was dead, they continued in the Faith, and were the joyful mother of children.

Act. I. 9.

*We had*, saith the Apostle, *the sentence of death in our selves, that we might turne, not to trust in our selves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.* As if he had said, the God whom we trust, is able to raise us, and will raise us hereafter out of our graves; how much easier is it to him to raise us out of our present danger and affliction.

Wherefore God himselfe is pleased, (to satisfie us once for all) to tell us, that women with child cannot be so hard put to it, but he can deliver them. For when he would express his allsufficient Power, in giving the Israelites such a deliverance, as they scarce could believe or expect, thus he doth express

Jer. 31. 8.

it; *I will gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child, and her that travelleth with child together.* That is, though in your return from captivity following a journey to Jerusalem, you may think of many impossibilities,

as, We being poor and helpless, how is it possible but that reclining and labouring women, must miscarry and perish by the way? Oh, saith God, I can strengthen them, give them a speedy & easy delivery, and make them even in that condition ( without long stay and losse of time ) able to go forward, till they come into their own Land.

So then, I say; If your apprehensions of danger in your travell, do any way discourage your faith, yet let Gods al sufficienty put life Zechariah into it. If to be delivered be marvellous in <sup>8.6.</sup> your eyes, yet it is not marvellous in mine eyes, Job.5.9. saith the Lord of hosts. <sup>Rev. 15.3.</sup>

But though we all acknowledge this in the notion, yet how few are there whose hearts of Gods attributes are possessed with the power of this truth. As it is one thing to hear a thing in the notion, p. 396. as for a man to think what he would do, if he were a Pilot or a Captain; and another thing, to have it in the reall managing, as when he is brought to fight. So it is here: It is one thing to say, I believe God is Almighty, and another to thing rest upon it. For not onely the stubborn Israelites did distrust God in the wilderness; and weak women, as Martha and Mary, questioned Christs power to raise Lazarus, because he had been four dayes dead: but no less a man then Moses himself questions how God could provide for six hundred thousand in the wilderness. Wherefore, strive with your unbelief, give to God the glory

John 11.  
21.

Numb. 11.

glory of his Power, Wisdom, and Mercy; fix the apprehensions thereof deeply upon your heart, and pray to the Author and Finisher of Faith, to help your unbelief. Conclude with the wife of Manoah, after you have mourned and prayed, with any hope of acceptance, *Surely, if the Lord had meant to destroy us, he would not have accepted a sacrifice at our hands.* Labour for the faith of those men and women of old, of whom it is written, that *by faith out of weakness they were made strong, and women received their dead to life.*

Yet let not the thoughts of Gods allsufficiency pass without one improvement more, which I shall give you in the words of a singular Divine.

*If God be Allsufficient, then learn to be content with God alone; for all desirable comforts are in him, as the effects are in the cause: as when Christ promises, that If any leave house, or Brethren, or Sisters, &c. for his sake and the Gospel, they shall receive an hundred fold now in this life, Houses, Brethren, and Sisters &c. They shall receive the very same things, that is, they shall find the comfort of all these things in God. Therefore consider, what heaven is: Do you think, that there you shall have a worse condition than here; you have a variegated appetite full of multiplicity, you want many comforts and conveniences; but when you come to*

*Hea-*

'Heaven, you do not lay aside your nature,  
 'but desire still. And yet there you shall  
 'have none but *God* alone, so that if all this  
 'vanity were not to be found in him, you  
 'could not be happy, even in Heaven it self.  
 'Therefore he saith, that he will be all in all:  
 Where fore comfort your selves with these  
 words.

## C H A P. XIV.

*Patience in the midst of their pains, the duty of traveling women.*

I Know very well, that 'tis far more easie to prescribe patience to others, then to exercise it to our selves. And therefore, if I tell women in this condition, that it would become them to be *less clamorous and vociferous in their ou'cries and screeches*: they will soon reply, that if we knew what they endured, we would not much blame them. (a) I grant indeed, that the pains of a woman in travel are alwayes expressed in Scripture, as the fittest comparison to set forth the greatest pains imaginable, as may be seen in the places quoted in the margin. And that the same word in the Original signifies both *pains in travel and pangs of death*, as critical Annotators do

(a) Gen. 3. 16

Jer. 13. 21

ch. 20. 23.

ch. 30. 6.

ch. 49. 24.

ch. 50. 43.

Isa. 21. 3.

Hos. 13. 13

Micah 4.

9, 10 Isa.

13. 8. John

16. 21.

1 Thes. 5. 3

Psal. 48. 6.

Rev. 12. 2.

K

observe

observe on Isa. 26.17. Psal. 18.4. Psal. 116.3. And that, in Scripture, the time of travell is commonly expressed by *crying out*, Isa. 26.17. chap. 42.14. And therefore I would not have any pious women to mis-interupt me, as if I counted it no less then sinful, to utter their complaints and outcries in the midst of their torments ; but I would think it commendable in any of them, if they would so arm themselves with patience before-hand, that [they might abate somewhat of those dreadfull groans and cryes, which do so much discourage their friends and relations, that are near them, and do much amaze the hearts, and weaken the hands, of those standers by, that they become the less helpful to them. But this is a small matter to what I intend. Give your self what liberty and ease you will, by pouring out your groans, so you look to the chief thing, that is, that your heart be all the while in a believing, praying, humble, patient, submissive frame.

To help your patience herein, you must know, that my meaning is not, that you should read, meditate, or perform any laborious duty at that time, but what I now mention as useful to you in that case, you must consider of before that hour, and so possess your mind with the grounds and principles of patience, that patience may then have in you its perfect work.

To which end, consider, that Sin is the prosecuting

curing cause of all sufferings; & therefore, if we understood, felt, considered the weight, desert, filth, and future evil of sin, how could we have the face to complain of any evil but that, or to make any other outcry, but that of the Apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?* How emphatical are those words of the Prophet, *Why should a living man complain, a man, for the punishment of his iniquities?* That is, seeing you are but a creature, a sinful creature, and yet a living creature, punished, not destroyed, punished for your iniquities, which deserve far worse; why should you complain, seeing 'tis the Lords mercy you are not consumed? Suppose a Ship, after a long voyage, being come into harbour, springs a leak; the Master is somewhat troubled at it, and is never quiet till it be stopped, so that it is an evil to him; yet he comforts himself in this, that it did not happen to him, when he was out at Sea; that had been a great deal worse, and might have proved the ruine of them all: So there is this comfort in all our sorrows, that they happen to us in this life; we feel they are upon us, but blessed be God they are upon us here in this world, so that by a sanctified use to be made of them, they shall not be upon us in the world to come.

Consider also, whose hand it is that inflicts these sorrowes upon you. Your pangs and

throws, as they were procured by sin, so they are disposed by the Lord. This made Job so patient; *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.* This made Eli submissive, when Samuel told him of the ruine of his family, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* Yea, this made David so silent, *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because thou Lord didst it.* So do you reason with your selves, shall not I drink of the cup of trembling, seeing 'tis in the hand of the Lord my God, who wil give me onely so much as shall profit me, and not destroy me? Shall I not stand under that cross that he hath laid on my shoulders, and stoop to that yoke, that he imposes on my neck. Bears and Lions take blows from their keepers, and shall not I bear any thing from my keeper and preserver? Children take bitter physick from the Mother, and hard blows from a Father, and shall not I be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? I cannot, I must not contend with my Maker, I will therefore humbly bend to him, lest he break me, and I will not make my cross heavier by impatience, then he hath made it by his providence.

Look also to the examples of patience, which are such as will abundantly shame us, if we murmur and repine at the hand of the Lord upon us.

God himself is pressed with our sins, as a cart is pressed that's full of stones, yet is still patient

ient and long-suffering to usward, not willing that we should die and perish in our sins, but turn and live.

The Lord Jesus endured innumerable injuries, unspeakable agonies, and intollerable grievances at his death; yet as a sheep before the shearer, so opened he not his mouth, he did neither strive nor cry, neither was his voice heard in the streets. And, alas, what are yon pains in comparison of his? The holy Spirit, our sanctifier and comforter, is exceedingly vexed and grieved at our yielding to many sins and corruptions, yet forsakes us not utterly, but waits all the day long, knocking at the doores of our hearts, and patiently expecting our reformation.

The holy Church of God hath been, from the first planting thereof, continually tossed to and fro, with what tempests Satan could raise against them.

They have been continually assaulted with the wild beasts of the wilderness, stung with fiery serpents, exposed to wants, hardships, dangers, &c. They have had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were fawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in Sheep skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy, &c.

Heb. 11.  
36,37,38.

Ecclesiastical Histories and Martyrologies are pregnant, with most famous instances of

the patience of the Saints, under such torments, as ordinary men have not the hardines to inflict, much less the patience to endure. But 'tis a tried rule then, which none more certain, that *God never calls his people to any suffering, but he will be with them, to enable them to bear it.* But least you should think, that the examples are all of the stronger sex, I shall mention only a few (whereas I could many more) of the singular examples of wemens patience, in such paines, as do, I think, equall the paines in travel.

*Just. Ecl.  
lib. 5.  
op. 1.*

\* *Blandina* a christian woman, being brought before the Heathen Judges, for the Faith of Christ, when as all her friends quak-ed for fear, least, at the time of her answer (by reason of the frailty of the Flesh) she should not be constant; she was so replenished with grace from above, that the Executioners which tormented her by turns from morning to night, fainted for wearinesse, and ceased; confessing themselves overcome, and that they were no longer able to plague her with any more punishments, wondring that she yet drew breath having her whole body rent in pieces, and the wounds open: they confessing withal that one of these torments was sufficient to cost her her life, much more so many & so great. But this blessed Woman (like a noble wrestler) was renewed at her confession; for as often as she said, *I AM A CHRISTIAN,* she was refreshed, and

felt

\* felt no pain of her punishment.

\* Potamena, a chaste and most beautiful Vir-  
gin having suffered infinitely, for the Faith  
of Christ; last of all, after great and grievous  
torments, terrible to be spoken of, together  
with her Mother Marcella, was burned  
with fire. Her body was first cruelly tor-  
mented with scourges, and afterwards boylung  
pitch poured upon her from the crown of her  
head to the sole of her feet.

Euseb. 1.6  
6.7.

\* Quinta, for refusing their Idols, had her  
feet bound together, and by them trailed and  
lugged along the streets, which were paved with  
sharpe stones, and being beaten against Mill-  
stones, and sorely scourged, she was brought to  
the Place of Execution and there put to  
death.

Cop. 40.

\* Mercuria, an honest Matron, and Di-  
onisia a very fruitfull woman for child-  
bearing, (which Children notwithstanding sh  
preferred not before the Lord) when they  
had confounded the Judge, which used all  
kind of persuasions, after they were so tor-  
mented, that they were past all sence and  
feeling, they were beheaded with the sword.  
But Ammonarion a holy Virgin passed them  
all, notably enduring all kind of torment,  
saith the Author.

Ibidem.

\* Theodosia, a modest christian Maid of Tyrus  
not fully eighteen years old, came to some  
christian prisoners, who were at their tryal,  
to comfort them, and was forthwith haled by  
the

Euseb. lib.  
8. cap. 25.

' the catchpoles before their judge, who  
 ' scourg'd her bare sides, with bitter and  
 ' grievous lashes, renting with the whip, her  
 ' white breasts and tender dugs, to the bare bones.  
 ' At length this holy Virgin scarce breathing,  
 ' yet patient enough for all these punishments,  
 ' was throne in the Sea, and their drowned.

' Ennathus a christian Virgin, was cruelly  
 ' scourged and tormented, and patiently bearing  
 ' it, was burned quick.

I have set down these memorable instances  
 in the very words of the Historian, and I say  
 the pains there mentioned are such as do well  
 nigh equal the pangs of travel.

*Object.* But those blessed women suffered for God, and  
 therefore had both his assistance & acceptance. But  
 my pains are the meer fruit of sin, & of the curse.  
 And therefore what are these instances to the pur-  
 pose? What do they concerne women in travel?

All afflictions of whatever kind are the  
 fruit of sin. Tis sin, that caused the em-  
 nity in the seed of the Serpent against the  
 seed of the Woman. Tis by sin that we are  
 born to trouble, are of few dayes and full of  
 evil. Tis sin that fills the creature with  
 vanity, under which the whole Creation groans  
 and travells in pain together antill now. Sin  
 is the Mother and Nurse of our miseries. So  
 that if it be a sufficient reason for you to be  
 dejected and impatient under your pains,  
 because they are the fruit of sin, then there  
 is the like reason for every afflicted person to

*Idem ib.*  
*cap. 27.*

*Object.*

*Answe.*

com.

complain and desponde and refuse to be comforted, even Martyrs themselves; for no crosse could befall us in life, nor any violent death have been inflicted upon us, if sin had not made so wide a gape, at which all calamities do enter upon us. Hence it is, that the Church did alway acknowledge Gods justice in all the evils that came upon them. And the Emperour *Mauricjous*, when bloody Villianes came and kil'd his wife and children before his face, and then came to murther him also, uttered no other words but these; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgements.*

But the main thing you speak of, wherein they had the advantage, is this, that *they suffered for God*, and so do not you. But let me tell you, that neither the punishment, be it never so bitter, nor the cause, be it never so good, do make a compleat Martyr without Patience. If this patience be wanting, that they be unquiet, murmuring and clamorous under the hand of God, I doubt they shall not be soon cannonized in Heaven, as here upon Earth. Their sufferings are not accepted if not patiently endured. They do not dy to the Lord, unlesse they lay down their lives, and offer themselves a wiling sacrifice; dying out of love to God, not out of unwilling subjection to the violence of Man.

Want of Patience, shewes want both of Faith and Love. And if want these, we are but

but as sounding brasse and tinckling Cymballs. If there be any thing we keep from God and resign not up all readily and intirely to him, we give him nothing, but we love something more then him. But if we part with a little willingly, if we be chearfull givers of our money to the needy, and honour the *Lord with our substance*, this is thank worthy with God, because 'tis supposed that the mortified mind is alike ready, when God requires it, to part with the whole for Christ.

The same principle (if a right principle act us) that inclines us to give a penny, must prompt us also to yield up all, even life it self, when God requires it. And were there is this habitual forsaking of all in affection, out of acknowledgement of Gods right to all we have, this mental resolution is with God *interpretative Martyrdom*. So then observe, that in all our Actions or Sufferings for God we must not lay so much stresse on the thing it self, as the principle, and end aimed at by the doer or sufferer. *God always accepts the will for the deed* (when impossibilites are the only bars to our per formance) but he never accepts the most costly actions or sufferings without a willing minde.

The upshot of all is this, that if we are sick with any naturall or adventitious malady, pained with any hurtful, or accidental casuality, when we suffer any loss in our Estates, or torments in our flesh; if then our patience have  
its

its perfect work, if we submit to the will of God, and ly down under his hand, as Isaac under the hand of Abraham, trusting in his name, and saying, with Job, though he kill me yet will I trust in him, if we bear all cheerfully, out of obedience to him, who disposes and sanctifies all to his people, this is acceptable with God, this is suffering for God, this is glorifying God in the fires; and the Spirit of God and of glory shall rest upon such. Therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, and be not wearied nor faint in your minds, remembraing that if you thus suffer in obedience to him, you suffer for him, and may lay hold therefore of Gods promises to the afflicted, which do equally concern you with any other sufferers.

Again, you have strange examples among the Papists, what the women of that sect will inflict on their own tender bodies, in their times of pittance. Take but one instance, Elizabeth Dutches of Turaine, was wont, at certain times, to provide most cruell Scourges, and taking three or four of her maids with her, shut her selfe into her closet, and gave to each of them a scourge in their hands, and stripping her selfe naked commanded them to lay her on with lusty stripes; and this she endured with such willing patience, that she would never groan or cry under their lashes. Now if those delicate Ladies can so patiently bear any (the most unmercifull) chastise.

*Spalathay.*

*lib. 3. c. 10.*

129.

chastisements they lay upon themselves, how much more should you bear the chastisement of your heavenly Father, who is not insensible of the smart he puts you to, and will not be unmindfull to give you an expected end.

Consider further, how gracious our God is in his readinesse to support his people under all afflictions. *I have read of one (a) Theodorus, lib. 3. c. 16.* *a Martyr put to extreme torments, by Julian the Apostate, and dimissed again by him,*

*(b) Ruffin. (c) orian sayes (d) he met with this Martyr a long time after and asked him, how he could* *lib. 1. cap. 36* *bear such unsufferable pains, he answered,*

*that at first it was grievous, but after a while there seemed to stand by him a young man in white, who with a soft handkercheif wiped off the sweat from his body, and bad him be of good cheer, insomuch that it was a punishment rather then a pleasure, to be taken of from the rack, sith when the tormentors had done the Angel was gone. Thus when our friends can do little for us, God can send his Angels, who excell in strength, to suggest, comfort, and minister help to us. But however, he himself will alwayes be with us, to make our beds in our sicknesse, to support our tyred bodies with his everlasting Arms, and to uphold our souls with his free Spirit. Thus our Saviour promises, to all his people in whatever condition they be, I will not leave you comfortlesse but I will come unto you.*

Yea God will be not only *nigh you*, but *careful* for you in the hour of your extremity to *lay no more upon you than you shall be able to bear.*

There was an host of *Angels*, near enough; though the Prophets man could not presently see them. There was a sacrifice at hand; though *Isaac*, at present, saw nothing but death before him. *Hagar*, when her bottle of water was spent, *sate down and wept*, (as if Gen. 21:19. utterly undone) her provision & her patience, her bottle and her hope were both out together. Yet there was upon the very place sufficient supply, though she did not perceive it, till her eyes were opened; when therefore your bodily eyes shall look round about, and see your friends mourning and taking on, leaving you as hopleesse, and you cannot see any one among them of whom you can say, that person is able to help me, yet with the eye of your faith you may see him who is invisible, standing at your right hand, and ready and able to deliver you, when it comes even to *the most desperate extremity.* Psal. 90.30

The Poets have feigned a story of *Pandora*, that she had a box given her, fraught and stuffed with all the miseries that might be, *onely Hope was placed in the bottom*, Epime- thus rashly opening it, a swarne of miseries flew about his ears, which he perceiving, clapt the cover on the box again with all possible speed, and so with much adoe saved hope sitting in the bottom. Thus by the heedless

Cæl. Rha.  
dig. Var.  
lett. l. 9.

lesse folly of the first woman, a whole army of miseries hath invaded the world, and many sorrows have been inflicted upon travelling

**Psal. 33.** **18.147.11.** **Heb. 6.13.** *left us hope, that anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.* Let us therefore keep our hope, in

**Rom. 4.18** *all extremities, yea against hope believe in hope as Abraham did.*

**Rom. 12. 12.** And carry our selves under our afflictions, as those that have hope towards God. *Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer.* For God doth often delay his mercies, that he may exercise these graces in us.

As some report of the Lyonesse that she leaves the young whelps so long, till they have almost killed themselves, with roaring and yelling, and then she comes and relieves them, by which meanes they become the more couragious, and the more patient of hunger. Thus God leaves Sarah to be childless; Hannah to mourn in bitterness of Soul for want of children. Elizabeth to be called barren; Rachel to kill her self almost with fretting for want of children. He leaves Jonah three dayes and three nights in the belly of

**\*Job. 6.11:** Hell, makes \*Job childlesse, leaves him comfortlesse and helplesse, as to any longer life;

**\*Psal. 38.2** leaves Heman free among the dead, and **\*David 3. ch.** groaning and roaring under intollerable evil.

Yea the tribes of Jacob to be as so many dry bones; Lazarus to be stinking in the grave;

**\*Act. 9.20** \*Dorcus to be dead and lamented; and all hope, that they shoule be saved, was gone; from those that

that were in the ship with the Apostles,\* I say. thus God leaves his people under pressing calamities and appearances of nothing, but destruction, that he may the more glorifie himself, and comfort them, in their deliverance and salvation at last. Therefore seeing the times and seasons are in his hands, and he hath made every thing beautifull in its season, what is more becoming us then to wait his time, as the husband-man patiently expects the time of harvest, the marriner waits for wind and tide, and the watch-man waits for the approach of the day. And though it may come to a critall extremity, yet in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.

But to draw to a conclusion. Above all things labour before this hour come to lay hold on Christ, by faith, and then you will have the like comfort with that good woman in the Marian persecution, who being brought before Bonner and tried concerning her faith, he threatned, that he would take away her husband, saith she, then Christ will be my husband; I will take away thy Child, she answered Christ is better to me than ten Sons; I will strip thee of all thy outward comforts; Yea but Christ is mine, said she, and you cannot strip me of him. So let this settle and stablish your mind, if Christ be yours all is yours, as far as shall be for your good. Though your travel & curum, repudiamus

*nicquid profetum est ex ore Dei. &c. Calvin. in Jerem. 31. 8.  
1588.*

may

\* Hinc colligimus praeponsterè facere eos, qui astimentant deis gentianam ex praesenti statu.

Atqui hoc viriū fere ingentium est nobis a naturā, & occupat sensus omnis nostros: hinc tanta diffi-

dentia, & hinc sit, ut omnes dei prōfessiones apud nos frigeant. —

Nam cum Deus ali- quid pro- missit, cir- spicimus quomodo fieri possit,

desimendas nostre

comprehen- dunt modis

& curum, repudiamus

may perhaps take away all strength from you, yet it cannot take away Christ, though it may cost perhaps the life of the child to save your life, yea though it should cost your life also, Yet still Christ is yours, and therefore death is yours. So that if God see it good for you, for your family and relation, that you should live longer, he can command deliverance for you; if otherwise, yet good is the word of the Lord. Wherefore keep fast hold of Christ, by faith; and then though you passe through the valley of the shadow of death you need fear no evill, for when your voice failes you, the Lord will hear those groans that can not be uttered; when your eyes faile you the Lord will be a light unto you; when your flesh and your heart faileth, God shall be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever.

To him I leave you. He supply in you by his own grace whatever is defective in these directions and helps I have given.

Luk.1.45. And blessed is she that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things that were told her from the Lord.

Lo this, wee have searched it, so it is, heare it; and know thou it for thy good. Job. 5. 27.

If any Reader find any good by it,  
Give glory to God.

FINIS.